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FORTY-EIGHTH SESSION

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PLENARY MEETING

Thursday, 7 October 1993
at 3 p.m.

NEW YORK

President: Mr. INSANALLY
(Guyana)

The meeting was called to order at 3.45 p.m.

ADDRESS BY CHIEF ERNEST SHONEKAN, HEAD OF STATE AND COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF OF THE ARMED FORCES OF THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF NIGERIA

The PRESIDENT: The Assembly will first hear an address by the Head of State and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

Chief Ernest Shonekan, Head of State and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The PRESIDENT: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations the Head of State and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, His Excellency Chief Ernest Shonekan, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

Chief Ernest SHONEKAN: It is a great honour and privilege, Sir, for me to address this Assembly under your presidency. Your election is a tribute to you and to your great country, Guyana. It furthermore attests to the international community's confidence in your ability to carry out the duties of President of the General Assembly during the next 12 months. I have no doubt that, given your sterling qualities, you will guide this session to a successful conclusion.

I also wish to commend your distinguished predecessor, His Excellency Mr. Stoyan Ganev of the Republic of Bulgaria, for the able and outstanding manner in which he conducted the affairs of the forty-seventh session.

I would also like to express my delegation's acknowledgement of the dedicated manner in which the Secretary-General, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, has been directing the work of our Organization during this crucial period.

On behalf of the Government and the people of Nigeria, I welcome all the new Member States, fully confident of the useful contribution they can make in furtherance of the noble objectives of the United Nations.

The relevance of our great Organization to the solution of the common problems facing humanity is more manifest today than at any time in our history. The complexity of these pressing concerns and the need to act rapidly and with resolve demand a greater degree of concerted efforts by members of the international community. Events happening around us demonstrate the urgency of this imperative. In the last few years, the international landscape has witnessed unprecedented transformations and rapid changes. The cold war has become a thing of the past. Progress has been made in nuclear disarmament. The wave of democratization which has been sweeping across the world has not diminished in intensity or breadth. The search for greater prosperity through emerging regional economic arrangements is spreading.

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set of problems than we are confronted with new and more challenging ones. Indeed, the promise of global peace and security and the vision of a new world order are inhibited by political and ethnic conflicts, economic and social disorder, and deepening poverty, particularly in developing countries.

In this connection, the consequences of feeble gestures or inaction are just too frightening to contemplate. It is therefore necessary to draw attention to the major concerns so that they can be fully addressed with a view to finding lasting solutions which are just and beneficial to every member of the international community.

In view of the positive changes in the international political environment, the United Nations has been placed at the centre of conflict resolution, having been accorded its rightful place in the promotion and maintenance of international peace and security. Unfortunately, our Organization is being overwhelmed by the avalanche of conflicts which it is suddenly called upon to resolve. Practically all regions of the world are embroiled in one conflict or another. No region, however, is as afflicted as Africa, either in the number of conflicts currently raging or in their unimaginable negative effects on people. In one conflict alone - that of Angola - as many as 1,000 people are reported to be dying each day. Angola is not alone in the unenviable situation created by civil conflict. Sudan, Somalia and Liberia can be cited.

Regional conflicts constitute a key threat to the achievement of global peace and security. This is why we welcome the active and increased involvement of the United Nations in peace-keeping and peace-building efforts. The role of our Organization in these areas will continue to expand as more States call on it for assistance in preventing or containing conflicts. Member States have the duty to support fully the work of the Organization in this very important role. They must be prepared to provide the Organization with the resources and the personnel it requires to cope with ever-growing peace-keeping demands. The price of peace may be high; we must be conscious, however, that it is a far better bargain compared with the price of war. In this connection, the recent mammoth and multifaceted peace-keeping operation in Cambodia gives cause for great optimism.

The United Nations must direct its peace-keeping operations in a manner that does not jeopardize its integrity or expose its peace-keepers to avoidable danger. Furthermore, it must be made clear to those who commit acts of aggression against United Nations peace-keepers that they will be adjudged guilty of crimes against the international community. The safety of United Nations peace-keepers is of utmost concern to countries which, like Nigeria, participate in many operations within and outside Africa.

I recall that, while on peace-keeping duty in the former Yugoslavia, Nigerian troops were subjected to attack resulting in casualties. The same is happening in Somalia, where Pakistani, Italian, Nigerian, American and Malaysian peace-keepers have been brutally killed. The national trauma occasioned by the loss of lives in United Nations peace-keeping missions gives rise to anxieties and doubts. However, I wish to assure this body that Nigeria will continue to demonstrate its commitment to the United Nations by continued participation in its peace-keeping operations.

It is in this same spirit of service that Nigeria is seeking election to the Security Council this year. I hope that Member States will give their valuable support to Nigeria's candidature.

In Africa, we have also made great efforts to contain and resolve conflicts in our continent. Nigeria has been involved in many of these efforts to bring peace to embattled areas. At the bilateral level, we hosted peace conferences of the parties to the conflict in the Sudan. We have, through the Organization of African Unity, joined other African States to monitor the cease-fire in Rwanda. In Liberia, Nigeria has been the moving force in the regional effort to bring peace to that war-torn country through the Military Observer Group (ECOMOG) of the Economic Community of West African States.

Because of positive developments in Liberia, we have indicated our intention to withdraw our troops at the appropriate time. This decision was based on the successful conclusion and acceptance of the Cotonou Agreement. All the parties to the conflict and the international community accept the Cotonou Agreement as the basis for durable peace in Liberia. If, as we hope, the accord is faithfully implemented, a democratically elected Government will have been installed in Liberia within the time-frame envisaged for the withdrawal of our troops. While we do not, therefore, contemplate a premature withdrawal, through this forum I call upon the international community to bear in mind that Nigeria has expended and continues to expend a significant amount in the peace-keeping operation in Liberia. Urgent international support to the ECOMOG effort has become crucial. Nigeria therefore welcomes Security Council resolution

866 (1993) of 21 September 1993, which set up the United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia (UNOMIL) and called upon Member States to support the peace process in Liberia by contributing to the Trust Fund being established by the Secretary-General. Early implementation will be absolutely necessary to sustain the process.

A cheering development in our continent is taking place in South Africa, where a democratic Government is now within sight. The doyen of South African nationalists, Nelson Mandela, confirmed the irreversibility of the march towards an apartheid-free society in his statement in this Hall two weeks ago. As evidence of his conviction, he called for the lifting of the remaining economic sanctions on South Africa. I wish, in the name of Nigeria, to congratulate South African leaders, black and white, who in the past two years have shown great statesmanship in the negotiations that have resulted in the establishment by law of the Transitional Executive Council.

South Africa has come a long way out of its apartheid-induced isolation. The international community should assist the South Africans in completing the process of full integration into the international system. To this end, those responsible for the mindless violence occurring daily should be unreservedly condemned. All South Africans should realize that the watchful eyes of the international community continue to be focused on their country.

Nigeria will take immediate steps to respond to Nelson Mandela's call for economic cooperation with South Africa. We shall also commence such contacts with the Transitional Executive Council, when it is physically established, as will facilitate diplomatic interaction at the appropriate time.

The road to democracy and the nurturing of democratic institutions in Africa have not been smooth. Indeed, the democratic enterprise in Africa faces many problems. Africa's economic underdevelopment and high level of illiteracy constitute major impediments to our attainment of democracy in its modern concept.

But such has been our fascination with democracy as a value deeply rooted in our culture that we in Africa have willingly decided to face up to the challenge of putting in place an enduring system of democratic governance in our respective countries. I can say confidently that this is an enterprise my country has taken seriously. Our programme of transition from military to civilian rule has not been without its difficult moments. However, we have not allowed them to deter us from our cherished goal. We are determined not to repeat the mistakes of our earlier attempts to evolve a system that would preserve the corporate unity of our country. It was, therefore, to ensure that the democratic process could be completed within the shortest possible period - indeed, by March 1994 - that the Interim National Government, which I have the honour and privilege to lead, was seen as the most viable option to ease the military out of power without bloodshed.

We in Nigeria fully understand and appreciate the interest and concern shown by the international community regarding recent political events in our country. After all, democratization has become a major component of the emerging new world order. We therefore appeal for the understanding of the international community in this difficult period in our nation's history. I can assure this Assembly that we are working very hard to find a just and generally acceptable solution to our problem. In this connection, I am happy to state that only yesterday I inaugurated a high-powered Commission of Eminent Persons to look into the circumstances leading to the annulment of the 12 June presidential election and submit a report within 60 days.

Nigeria has always respected the purposes and principles contained in the United Nations Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Aware that the human person is the central subject and main beneficiary of human rights, we fully believe that every citizen should participate actively, within legal limits, in the realization of these rights. We welcome the Vienna Declaration on human rights and will, therefore, continue to be committed to the freedom of all citizens and institutions that are engaged in human-rights activities.

One of the sad consequences of human-rights violations is the incidence of refugees and displaced persons - people fleeing from insecurity to safe havens, either within or outside their national territories. Today, several countries, including Nigeria, cater for the needs of millions of refugees. We urge the countries of origin of these people to create an environment conducive to their return. This would help to reduce the severity of the impact of refugee flows on host nations, particularly in Africa, which are themselves faced with excruciating economic difficulties.

Nigeria notes with great satisfaction that the situation in the Middle East has taken a definite turn for the better. The historic signing of the peace agreement by Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) is a welcome and important landmark. We are convinced that this will lay the foundation for peace between Israel and the Palestinians and will constitute an indispensable element for the peaceful resolution of the entire Middle East problem. We again congratulate the Government of Israel and the leadership of the PLO, whose spirit of conciliation made the agreement a reality. We also commend the Governments of Norway, the United States of America and the Russian Federation for their efforts and their encouragement and support, which made the peace agreement possible.

The debt crisis remains the most serious obstacle to our economic development. The various attempts of creditor countries to address this problem have been limited in scope and have failed adequately to deal with the debt problem of middle-income countries. Therefore, while noting with appreciation the relief provided under the Trinidad, Toronto and Houston terms, we must emphasize that the fundamental crisis in the economic development of developing countries has not been effectively addressed. The fact that the debt of African countries in 1992 amounted to $275 billion - about 73 per cent of the total output of the African continent - demonstrates clearly the seriousness of the situation. Moreover, when it is borne in mind that debt-servicing obligations are estimated at about 30 per cent of the value of our exports, the crippling effect on our economies becomes apparent. We therefore propose a dialogue involving all the parties to enable the issues to be properly addressed.

The various dimensions of Africa's economic problems are worth repeating, as we who are at the receiving end of the economic dislocation of varying degrees that affects most African countries realize the necessity of continuing to draw our economic plight to the attention of the rest of the world. This matter must not be regarded lightly. The African economic crisis, as well as being a major source of the prevailing social and political turmoil in many countries of the region, must be seen as a serious threat to the longer-term prospects for the global economy.

Let me be so bold as to say that the persistence of the crisis is not due to inaction on the part of the African Governments concerned. On the contrary - taking the example of my country - the truth is that our determination to face up to the challenge of development is obvious from the policy reforms we have been implementing for nearly seven years in order to restructure and revitalize the economy. These reforms are already yielding some positive results, but not of the magnitude that we regard as necessary if there is to be a significant upturn in the economy.

It would not be far-fetched to suggest that the fact that the economic reforms that have been put in place have enjoyed only limited success is apparently due to lack of adequate support from the international community to complement our genuine efforts to revamp our respective economies. For instance, the flow of external finance to African countries still leaves much to be desired, despite the efforts made in recent years by countries like mine to ensure a climate conducive to foreign investment. We therefore urge a change of heart on the part of our development partners, as this will be mutually beneficial. We also call on the United Nations system to mobilize its machinery fully so that lingering African economic problems may be addressed effectively.

Today, Africa faces daunting environmental problems too. Desertification, drought, soil and marine erosion and shortage of fresh water are new difficulties confronting the continent. Two fifths of Africa's land mass has turned into desert. African countries continue to make efforts to arrest this threat to our livelihood. However, we do not have sufficient resources to combat the scourge. We therefore urge the speedy conclusion of an international convention, complete with a funding mechanism, to combat drought and desertification.

In the aftermath of the cold war, appreciable progress has been made in the field of disarmament. It is comforting to note that, to a greater extent than during any other period in recent history, significant efforts have been made by States to achieve openness and transparency with regard to security issues. The unilateral decision of the nuclear-weapon States to halt nuclear testing was universally applauded. Needless to say, therefore, we were disappointed at the breach of the moratorium that occurred a few days ago. We appeal once again to all nuclear-weapon States to refrain from resuming nuclear testing and, thereby, enhance the prospects for the non-proliferation Treaty review and extension Conference in 1995, which will be crucial to efforts to halt nuclear proliferation.

Since the creation of the United Nations 48 years ago, the world in which the Organization exists has undergone

many changes. These changes are reflected in its membership, which, since 1945, has almost quadrupled. The distribution of power and influence in the world has changed. The institutions of the United Nations cannot and should not be immune to the changes. Indeed, in order to maintain its relevance, the United Nations must reflect the changes in its environment. We renew our call for a serious review of some of the institutions of the Organization - particularly the Security Council. We have always stressed the need to expand the membership of the Council by the admission of additional permanent members so that all regions of the world would be represented. It is our hope that negotiations on this crucial issue will be advanced during this session of the General Assembly.

Notwithstanding the several positive developments of the past few years, the world still faces many challenges. In addition to the continued disruption of the peace and stability of many States by raging internal conflicts, there are problems that require urgent action. The spread of poverty and the increasing imbalance between the developing and the developed countries are two of the more spectacular of these problems. We are convinced that correction of this unacceptable situation is an attainable objective.

However, the solution requires a commitment by all States to accept and vigorously practise the concept of international cooperation. My country remains an active partner in this cooperative endeavour to make our world safer and more prosperous.

As we look forward to the celebration, in two years' time, of the fiftieth anniversary of the birth of the United Nations, there is in the air much optimism about the future of the Organization. The new world order, if it is to fulfil its promise, must be constructed on the solid foundation of the principles of the Charter of the United Nations. Thus, our Organization is bound to play a central role in sustaining a world of the sovereign equality of States; a world of respect for fundamental human rights; a world of global interdependence and of cooperation for development.

Let all Member States demonstrate the determination to ensure that our world body justifies the expectations of humanity.

The PRESIDENT: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Head of State and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of the Federal Republic of Nigeria for the statement he has just made.

Chief Ernest Shonekan, Head of State and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

PROGRAMME OF WORK

The PRESIDENT: Before calling on the next speaker, I should like to inform members that tomorrow morning the plenary meeting of the General Assembly will start at 9.30 instead of 10.

The Assembly will consider, before continuing the general debate, the third report of the General Committee. It will also take up agenda item 38, "Elimination of apartheid and establishment of a united, democratic and non-racial South Africa".

Under this item, the Assembly will consider a draft resolution on the lifting of sanctions against South Africa, which was issued today as document A/48/L.2.

It is my understanding that broad-based consultations within and among regional groups have taken place and that as a consequence draft resolution A/48/L.2 is a consensus text. It has furthermore been agreed that there be no debate on agenda item 38 at this stage and that the only speaker will be the representative of Nigeria to introduce draft resolution A/48/L.2.

May I point out that the question of apartheid will be discussed in plenary meeting at a later date during the session.

AGENDA ITEM 9 (*continued*)

GENERAL DEBATE

Mr. RWEGASIRA (United Republic of Tanzania): I am delighted to extend to you, Sir, on behalf of the Tanzanian delegation, our sincere congratulations on your well-deserved election to the presidency of the General Assembly at its forty-eighth session. Over the past two weeks you have already demonstrated your considerable diplomatic skills and leadership qualities. We look forward to a productive session under your guidance.

I would also like to extend my delegation's appreciation to your predecessor, His Excellency Mr. Stoyan Ganev, for the leadership he provided to the forty-seventh session of the General Assembly.

The Secretary-General and the staff he leads have continued to give of their best to our Organization. Over the past year they have demonstrated a remarkable capacity to take on additional responsibilities despite dwindling resources. We owe them a debt of gratitude and they have a right to expect our support as they carry out the work we have entrusted to them.

During the past year, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Monaco, Eritrea, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Andorra have joined the United Nations as sovereign and independent States. It gives me great pleasure to extend to them a warm welcome and sincere congratulations and to say how much we look forward to working closely with all of them in the common endeavour to make our world a better place for our peoples and for all mankind.

Another year has passed since we last met in the general debate and pledged to intensify our efforts to satisfy the aspirations of our peoples for world peace and security, for economic and social justice and for progress and development, in conditions of freedom and human dignity. It is proper that as we start another session, we should take stock of the progress made towards the realization of these aspirations.

The problems of southern Africa remained a major preoccupation of my Government during the past year. My delegation commends the international community for its contribution in the search for solutions to the problems of apartheid in South Africa and the conflicts in Angola and Mozambique.

Over the last 12 months, the advance towards the eradication of apartheid has brought the goal nearer than ever before. The call by the representatives of the majority people of South Africa, notably by President Nelson Mandela of the African National Congress of Azania (ANC), for the lifting of virtually all remaining economic and trade sanctions means that the progress made thus far, and the progress soon to be made, represent profound and irreversible change in terms of the Declaration on Apartheid and its Destructive Consequences in Southern Africa. Whatever happens, South Africa will never be the same.

A very important recent signal suggesting that the turning-point is very close was the fixing of 27 April 1994 as election day for all South Africans. My delegation warmly welcomes this development and urges all concerned to work to achieve that target. The most important development, however, has been the enactment last month of the legislation necessary for the establishment of an independent electoral commission, an independent media council and an independent broadcasting authority as well as a Transitional Executive Council.

Regrettably, there remain many obstacles on the road. Violence remains the most serious obstacle impeding progress towards the establishment of a united, democratic and non-racial South Africa. With 20,000 murders per year, according to records compiled by the Southern African Research and Documentation Centre, South Africa's reputation of being the most violent country in the world is well deserved. The leadership of the democratic forces in the country must be commended for denying the forces of death and destruction the satisfaction of derailing the peace process. But the threat remains real and great, as evidenced by the brutal assassination of Chris Hani in April and the storming by a right-wing racist white group of the negotiations at the World Trade Centre in June.

International monitoring of the violence has provided some reassurance to the victims of apartheid violence. The temerity and audacity shown by the perpetrators of violence and the blind eye turned to it by some members, including leaders, of the country's security forces, argue for a much larger, higher-profile United Nations presence in South Africa. I urge the United Nations to respond positively to the urgent pleas of the victims of violence for more United Nations monitors.

Another obstacle is the non-participation by some groups in the peace process and the threat of violence issued by some of them. This is yet another argument for increasing the presence and raising the profile of the United Nations, and of the world community as a whole, in South Africa.

Angola poses a similar but more urgent challenge to the United Nations. If it has a conscience, the international community simply cannot allow the continuation of a conflict that is estimated to be claiming a thousand lives a day. It must act to stop this carnage.

At the same time, we must make every effort to enable the United Nations to recover from the considerable damage done to its credibility and moral authority by its inability to respond adequately and promptly to the grave challenges posed by Jonas Savimbi. The adoption of Security Council resolution 864 (1993) on 15 September 1993 has served to put Jonas Savimbi on

notice that the United Nations will no longer allow his obstinacy and prevarication to continue to thwart the will of the Angolan people, whose hopes for peace and an opportunity to improve their lives have been so rudely shaken by his greed for power. UNITA and Savimbi must be left in no doubt that there is more to come if they continue to ignore the pleas of the international community for a cease-fire, for a return to the Bicesse Accords and for respect for the electoral verdict of the Angolan people.

This applies equally to UNITA's obligation to allow and to facilitate access by humanitarian and relief organizations to the victims of the conflict. Many relief personnel have exposed themselves to serious danger in order to help victims of the conflict. We commend them for their heroism and compassion. The best form of gratitude, however, is to ensure that those responsible for this criminal conduct receive appropriate punishment.

Although different, Mozambique offers some parallels with Angola, and it remains to be seen during the implementation of the Mozambican peace accords whether the correct lessons have been learned from the Angolan experience. The delay in the implementation of the General Peace Agreement is a matter of great concern because of the obvious threat it poses to the cease-fire. We are pleased to note that the Security Council has taken the same serious view of the delay. We are pleased also to note that at long last the leader of RENAMO, Mr. Afonso Dhlakama, has been able to overcome the difficulties which until recently prevented him from meeting with President Chissano. We welcome the talks between the two leaders and commend President Chissano for bending over backwards to accommodate RENAMO. But we are concerned that the good will and magnanimity of the Government of Mozambique are not being reciprocated by RENAMO and its leadership. Instead, we observe disturbing signs of its following in the footsteps of Savimbi.

For example, the Government is still not able to provide administrative services in the areas under the control of RENAMO. The United Nations has a duty to prevent such a blatant violation of the General Peace Agreement. But, more ominously, RENAMO seems to be contriving to create a situation in which it hopes to persuade the world to accept the holding of elections before the process of demobilization and the integration of forces has begun. We must spare no efforts to enable the United Nations to do all in its power to prevent an Angola-type situation from emerging in Mozambique.

Regrettably, as the year continued there were more disappointments than successes. With the exception of Angola, perhaps the most disconcerting were the setbacks suffered by the peace efforts in the former Yugoslavia - in particular in Bosnia and Herzegovina - in Afghanistan and in Somalia, where the turn of events has led to a wholly unexpected and unwelcome confrontation between the United Nations and one of the factions in the tragic fratricidal conflict plaguing that country.

We must do all we can to protect and preserve the integrity and moral authority of the United Nations in Somalia. Those responsible for the killing of United Nations peace-keeping forces and for instigating attacks against them must be left in no doubt about the dire consequences of their criminal conduct. But it goes without saying that the United Nations forces must themselves act with maximum restraint.

Because Somalia is such a new experience for the United Nations, the outcome of its operation there is of crucial importance to the international community. The United Nations cannot afford to fail in its mission of humanitarian assistance, peace-building and peace-keeping in Somalia. Nor can it afford serious mistakes. My delegation therefore welcomes the ongoing debate on how best to achieve the United Nations mission in Somalia. The call for the United Nations to refocus its attention on the original mandate and to pay greater attention to the search for a political solution, along the lines of the Addis Ababa Agreement, deserves most urgent attention.

The cease-fire in Liberia, while holding, will remain fragile while tensions remain high and the end of the crisis is not in sight. The countries of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) must be commended for undertaking an extremely costly and dangerous peace-keeping mission in Liberia on behalf of the international community. They need more than the moral and political support of the world community. We therefore welcome the establishment, by Security Council resolution 866 (1993) of 22 September 1993, of the United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia (UNOMIL), which will work alongside the precedent-setting African peace-keeping effort under the auspices of ECOWAS to help resolve the Liberian conflict.

The people of Western Sahara are understandably frustrated that, five years after the adoption of the United Nations plan for a referendum in Western Sahara, the international community has still not been able to give

them an opportunity to exercise their right to self-determination. It is not good enough to tell them that every effort is being made to overcome the problems which have prevented the holding of the referendum. After five years of discussion of the modalities of implementation, they have a right to ask whether all the parties have been negotiating in good faith.

Another African conflict-resolution initiative which deserves urgent United Nations support is the Peace Agreement between the Government of Rwanda and the Rwandese Patriotic Front (RPF), which was signed in Arusha, Tanzania, on 4 August 1993 after a year of arduous and protracted negotiations. As Facilitator in the negotiations, Tanzania pays tribute to the parties to the negotiations for their spirit of give and take, which enabled the negotiations to succeed. We pay tribute to the Organization of African Unity (OAU) for its invaluable role throughout the peace process. We also pay tribute to the observer countries - Belgium, Burundi, France, Germany, Senegal, Uganda, the United States and Zaire - and to the United Nations for their encouragement and support. Nor should we forget the invaluable contribution of Mali, Nigeria, Tunisia and Zimbabwe, which provided personnel for the Neutral Military Observer Group (NMOG II), which has been monitoring the cease-fire.

As implementation of the Agreement begins, priority must now be given to the establishment of the neutral international force. The joint delegation of the Government of Rwanda and the Rwandese Patriotic Front currently visiting the United Nations has been stressing that everything else hinges on the establishment of that force. I echo their appeal for speed in establishing the force. My delegation therefore welcomes the timely adoption of Security Council resolution 872 (1993) on 5 October 1993, authorizing the establishment of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda (UNAMIR), and urges its speedy implementation.

Comparisons are inadequate for measuring the suffering or damage endured by people in a war, but it is difficult to think of another current conflict in which a whole people has been subjected to the suffering, inhumanity and indignities that have been imposed on the Muslim population of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The inability of the United Nations to offer any hope to the Bosnian Muslims is one of the greatest tragedies of our time. It is bad enough that the international community has failed to put an end to the atrocities which continue to be inflicted on the Bosnian Muslims. But for the world community in these circumstances to continue to deny them the right to acquire the means with which to protect themselves is incomprehensible. The least that the United Nations can do is to lift the arms embargo on Bosnia and Herzegovina in order to enable the people to defend their families and their country.

At long last there are signs of an emerging solution to the long-festering sore of the root cause of the Middle East problem - the question of Palestine - the persistence of which has for 40 years posed a serious moral dilemma for the international community's sense of justice, fairness and equality. The agreement signed in Washington on 13 September 1993 between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) on mutual recognition, which also provides for limited autonomy for Palestinians in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank town of Jericho, has been rightly hailed as a major breakthrough in the Middle East negotiations. My delegation joins in welcoming this development and in congratulating Israel and the PLO on the courage they have shown in taking this bold step towards the resolution of the intractable question of Palestine. The first step is always the most difficult to take. We are, therefore, hopeful that Israel and the PLO will now be able to move quickly to advance the process towards a just and lasting solution to the question of Palestine and thus open the way towards a comprehensive settlement of the Arab/Israel conflict.

For the people of Cyprus - another vexed question that has defied solution for nearly 20 years - a meaningful new world order must be one that respects the unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity as well as the non-aligned status of that country, and restores a sense of hope to the two communities for a future of partnership and cooperation in complete equality and human dignity. It is a matter of great disappointment that the hopes raised by the resumption early in the year of negotiations under the good offices of the Secretary-General proved to be premature.

In Cambodia, the efforts of the United Nations to find a just and enduring end to the long-running conflict have begun to bear fruit. The successful organization and supervision of the Cambodian elections concluded an important and crucial phase of the peace effort. However, the people of Cambodia are not yet out of the woods. There is still a lot of healing of wounds to be done. We applaud the efforts being exerted to enable those who walked out of the peace process to rejoin it as the phase of reconciliation, reconstruction and development begins.

There is good news too with regard to the situation in Central America. There, the situation has continued to evolve positively, thus rewarding the international community in its efforts to encourage the region to find regional solutions to its problems.

My delegation welcomes the growing involvement of the Security Council in the search for solutions to many conflicts around the world. But the Council's capacity to respond to the growing demands for its intervention and the readiness of the international community to continue to repose its trust and confidence in the Council will depend on its ability to institute the necessary reforms.

One such reform that has been called for is the expansion of the Council to take account of today's vastly changed circumstances in comparison with 1965, when the Council was last expanded. I need not stress that any expansion must take account of the need to ensure equity in geographical representation. This also applies to the call for consideration to be given to increasing the number of permanent members.

Another reform relates to the need to address the problem of selectivity by the Council in responding to various conflicts. Unless the Council is seen to treat equally all challenges to its authority, it runs the risk of losing the international community's support and trust, which are crucial if the Council's actions are to be accepted as legitimate.

In addition, the old problem of the outdated veto is still with us and failure to do something about it will not make it go away. The very encouraging practice of reaching decisions by consensus has reduced the demand for the abolition of the veto. This has helped, but it is not enough. So long as the veto exists, the threat of its use will continue to affect the outcome of debates. One member will always be able to thwart the will of the international community.

How the Council does its work is also a matter of great interest and concern to the international community. The call for transparency is a very legitimate one, but of greater concern is the growing conviction on the part of a large segment of the membership of the United Nations that the Council has been stretching its interpretation of the Charter to include things not foreseen in Chapter VII, such as humanitarian emergencies, human rights, ecological threats, drug trafficking and the like. While the Council must be enabled to respond to new situations, there is a real danger that it will allow itself to be guided not by the Charter but by the dictates of a few Member States.

Disarmament has always been a major preoccupation of the international community for reasons that are self-evident. There are far too many weapons around the world - more than nations need for their legitimate defence. The priority given to the chemical weapons Convention reflects the international community's concern about the great danger posed to international peace and security by this particular weapon of mass destruction. Regrettably, nuclear arms, which pose an even greater threat, have not received the priority consideration they deserve. While we applaud the agreements concluded by the United States and the Russian Federation for sharp reductions in their nuclear arsenals, the fact should not be overlooked that, even after the START Treaty, there are today in their stockpiles five times more of this category of nuclear weapons than existed at the time of the signing of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons in 1968, and the level is the same as it was when they began negotiations nine years before the START Treaty was signed. The reality of the nuclear threat becomes more evident if we take account of the nuclear-weapon stocks of the other nuclear-weapon States. That is why we must urge all nuclear-weapon States to accord the highest priority to nuclear disarmament.

My delegation has always regarded the non-proliferation Treaty, despite its flaws, and a comprehensive test-ban treaty as important international instruments that can advance the cause of nuclear disarmament. It goes without saying that before the non-proliferation Treaty can perform this role, its inherent flaws - especially its provisions discriminating between nuclear-weapon and non-nuclear-weapon States - must be addressed. The two major nuclear-weapon States have agreed on some reductions in their stockpiles. They need to go much further and to make clear that the objective is the eventual elimination of those stockpiles, which means that they must stop, reverse and eventually put an end to vertical proliferation. The 1995 Review Conference of the Treaty will be a success to the extent that it comes to grips with these flaws.

The most hopeful recent development towards a comprehensive test-ban treaty has been the voluntary moratorium or restraint on testing unilaterally agreed to by all the nuclear-weapon States. That is why we welcome the decision of the United States of America to extend its moratorium. We very much hope that this extension will persuade the other nuclear-weapon States to maintain their

moratoriums and that the halt can be used to negotiate a comprehensive test-ban treaty under the auspices of the Conference on Disarmament or the Amendment Conference of the partial test-ban Treaty.

The world economic statistics for the period 1992 to 1993 send mixed signals. Overall, despite strong growth in a number of developing countries, there was negligible growth in the world economy. For much of the African continent, per capita output has continued to decline, placing the continent in a precarious situation. The average growth of gross domestic product in Africa reached a new low of 1.4 per cent in 1992, owing in part to drought, civil wars, political instability and the long-term effects of deteriorating terms of trade as a result of the inequitable operation of the present world order.

The United Nations agenda for the development of Africa in the 1990s, adopted by the General Assembly at its last session, seems unlikely to fare any better than its predecessor, the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development, 1986-1990. As became obvious during the review of the Programme of Action carried out in 1990, that initiative fell short of the continent's expectations. Nevertheless, Tanzania believes that both the United Nations and the international community at large still have the ability to play a greater role in assisting the continent to overcome its poverty.

Recovery of investments is crucial to the long-term improvement of the economic performance of the African continent. However, contrary to earlier expectations, economic reform has not brought a significant increase in investments. Throughout Africa, it remains far below its peak level of the mid-1970s as a result of foreign exchange constraints arising from deteriorating terms of trade and limited capacity to import capital goods, and because of the debt burden and debt servicing.

Tanzania welcomes the initiative taken by some donor countries to address the problem of the debt crisis by writing off part of the bilateral official debt of the least developed countries. However, this is only part of the solution to the problem. Apart from debt-relief measures, Africa needs a fresh infusion of financial resources to improve the rate of investment and to accelerate the economic growth of affected countries.

It is for this reason that Tanzania welcomes the initiative of the Government of Japan to organize, in collaboration with the United Nations and the Global Coalition for Africa, the Tokyo International Conference on African Development in October 1993, with a view to highlighting the issue of African economic development as one of the central themes on the international agenda for the twenty-first century. My delegation hopes that the Tokyo Conference will come up with concrete recommendations on measures designed to help the African continent overcome its problems once and for all, as well as to remind the international community of its commitment to Africa and the need to help the continent face the challenges of the twenty-first century from a position of strength.

We have been walking the road from Rio for more than a year now. In Rio we made a strong commitment to protect our planet by promoting sustainable development through a global partnership. Though a basic framework to make the world's environment healthier in the twenty-first century was laid out at Rio, we have not, so far, begun making those commitments a reality. The truth is, the Earth is environmentally poorer than it was a year ago.

The high-level Commission on Sustainable Development has been formed to monitor progress in the implementation of Agenda 21 and other activities related to the integration of environmental and developmental goals through the United Nations system. Allow me to express my delegation's hope that this Commission will be an action-oriented body which will effectively translate the commitments made in Rio into a reality, and that it will not end up being financially strapped, as has often been the fate of other United Nations institutions.

A milestone reached at Rio was the decision to prepare an international convention to combat desertification and drought. The Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee for the elaboration of this convention has already held its first and second substantive sessions and it is hoped that, hopefully by this time next year, a convention to combat desertification and drought will have been finalized. While welcoming the progress made during the first two substantive sessions, Tanzania wishes to call for maximum support and cooperation from all countries to ensure the success of the global convention, which has particular relevance for Africa. The convention should be looked upon, not only as a mechanism to attract resources, but also as a global partnership in combating a global phenomenon threatening the sustainable development of over 900 million people worldwide.

There is no end to our expectations in fulfilment of the United Nations. As the largest world family, it has to take care of all the members of the family, rich and poor,

able and disabled. The world would be a better place for mankind if we in the United Nations act expeditiously, judiciously and fairly. After all, it is the people who constitute the States that need help.

Mr. BASENDWAH (Yemen) *(interpretation from Arabic)*: It gives me pleasure to convey to you, Sir, on my own behalf and on behalf of the delegation of Yemen, my most sincere congratulations on your election to the presidency of the forty-eighth session of the General Assembly. I have no doubt that you deserve the trust that has been placed in you by the Member States of this great international Organization. Your personal qualities, long experience, sagacity and tact make you eminently qualified to conduct the deliberations of this session with excellence and effectiveness. Just as your election attests to your high standing at the international level, it bespeaks the esteem in which your country is held by other countries the world over. We wish you every success in the important tasks assigned to you and trust this session will achieve its important goals so as to strengthen the functioning of the United Nations and its organs and enhance their effectiveness.

I should also like to take this opportunity to express our thanks and appreciation to your predecessor, Mr. Ganev of Bulgaria, for the important role he played in guiding the work and deliberations of the forty-seventh session of the General Assembly.

I cannot fail to extend my best wishes to the Secretary-General, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, for his tireless efforts aimed at strengthening the work of our great Organization, upholding the principles and achieving the goals of its Charter. We should also like to express our appreciation for his annual report (A/48/1) on the work of the United Nations, in which he deals with the most important items on the agenda of this session.

We should also like to avail ourselves of this opportunity to welcome those States that have recently joined the United Nations and wish them every success. Their presence here among us attests to the international and universal nature of the Organization and contributes to the attainment of our common goals, in accordance with the purposes and principles of the Charter.

This is the fourth session in which the Republic of Yemen is represented by one delegation, whereas in the past it was represented by two. On 22 May 1990, our country regained its unity after about two centuries of disunity in the course of which a power struggle raged between the occupiers of various parts of the country. This reached its peak on 30 November 1967, when Yemen was divided into two States.

Although that miraculous unitary achievement of four years ago seemed impossible, our people and its wise leaders were able to bring it about, and other peoples that are still divided may look upon our example with hope. Our people fought and made many sacrifices over many generations for the attainment of that objective. The unity of our homeland has been characterized by pluralism, multilateralism and democracy.

Furthermore, on 27 April of this year the Republic of Yemen crowned its march towards democracy with general parliamentary elections that were free, impartial and honest. Representatives of international organizations that defend democratic ideals participated by following those elections closely and monitoring their proper procedure. Western and Arab monitors welcomed that democratic exercise in Yemen, and *The New York Times* described the events in our country as "a true Arab revolution". In the light of all this, we believe we are justified in feeling a sense of pride as we take part in this session against the backdrop of such achievement by a country that has worked two miracles which no one thought possible only four years ago.

Our success in opting for democracy on the basis of pluralism and the multiparty system clearly demonstrates that the seeds of democracy can germinate in any soil once it is planted and is not the preserve of any special soil. No one should marvel, however, at the success of democracy in our country. Yemen, as historians know, was the first cradle of the practice of *"Shura"*, that is to say parliamentary activity, from as far back as the days of the Kingdom of Sabã 2,800 years ago. This is attested to in the Holy Koran and other earlier books of revelation.

Three years have passed since the unfortunate invasion of Kuwait by Iraq and the second Gulf crisis that ensued. My country continues to suffer the terrible consequences of that crisis. One million of our expatriate countrymen had to return to Yemen as a result of that war, and yet we have not received any external assistance from any quarter whatever to lighten the burden of that return. The Republic of Yemen is and has always been against the use of armed force in resolving conflicts. We reject the idea of the acquisition of the territories of others by force. That is why our position on this situation remains unchanged. We consider that Kuwait is a sovereign, independent State and not part of any other State. Since

the Republic of Yemen is an Arab country that, geographically, is part of the Arabian Peninsula, we have been deeply chagrined by what happened between the two neighbouring, sister countries of Iraq and Kuwait, and by the resultant deep cracks in the edifice of Arab solidarity. For that reason, the Republic of Yemen has continued to urge the Iraqi leaders to carry out all that is called for in international resolutions. In that context the responsiveness and readiness to cooperate demonstrated until now by the Government of Iraq are cause for optimism and should lead us to review the sanctions that are now in place.

Similarly, ensuring the territorial integrity and safeguarding the sovereignty and independence of the Republic of Kuwait are an absolute necessity. None the less, this can never be achieved in a lasting and definitive manner unless the two countries reach a mutually acceptable formula of agreement and the Arab countries, in particular, as well as the international community as a whole, guarantee strict adherence to such agreement so that neither of the two countries may breach it. Such agreement should make it possible to reassure the State of Kuwait that the events of 2 August 1990 will not recur and also make it possible to resolve all outstanding issues so as to prevent any future dispute.

There is no doubt that our Kuwaiti brethren are well aware of the fact that the sovereignty, independence and security of Kuwait cannot be guaranteed indefinitely by dependence on international protection alone but must have its solid basis in sound and equitable relations between their country and Iraq in the framework of a climate of security and fraternal reconciliation in the region.

Given Iraq's readiness to cooperate in the implementation of Security Council resolutions, we believe that the blockade against Iraq is no longer justified. Indeed, the suffering of the Iraqi people has reached an intolerable level, and we do not believe that the international community is prepared to accept the death of innocent women, children and old people because of lack of medication. At the same time, my country reaffirms the need to preserve the unity and territorial integrity of Iraq, and we ask that there be no further destruction of Iraq's economic, scientific and social infrastructures.

Following the establishment of the Republic of Yemen, my country declared that one of the goals of Yemeni unity is to contribute to the security and stability of our region and to promote cooperation and integration between all its countries. In pursuance of that objective, relations between Oman and Yemen have been strengthened and have become a model to be followed. However, this sound beginning is but a key, albeit an important key, to the doors which, when fully opened, will allow movement on the economic, security and trade tracks towards economic integration and security cooperation between all the region's countries especially now that between Yemen and Oman there are the initial steps towards easy access for passengers and goods. There is no doubt that Yemeni-Omani relations are of special significance to the future stability and prosperity of the region. They represent a practical and important beginning to the much needed process of putting the Arab house in order both at the regional and the Arab levels. They are also relations that pose no threat to the interests of others as they are open, transparent and well-defined as regards their ends and means.

Similarly, Yemen's relations with other sister countries are based on historic kinship and religious links and on the fact that we all belong to one and the same Nation. That is the reason why Yemen has always stood by its brethren in neighbouring countries and in the Arab world in general and has always endeavoured to raise such relations to the level that would enable it to perform its role *vis-à-vis* Arab and international issues.

As regards the border issues between Yemen and Saudi Arabia, Yemen has been engaged since November 1972 in talks with our brethren in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in a climate of goodwill and with a genuine desire to turn a new leaf. Following initial contacts last year in Geneva, a joint committee of experts was set up to negotiate the border problem that lies at the forefront of the two countries' bilateral concerns. That committee has held five rounds of negotiations, the most recent of which was held at T'az two months ago. In the meantime, other contacts have been taking place between President Ali Abdullah Saleh and King Fahd, Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, through an exchange of letters, the last of which was the letter I delivered to His Majesty King Fahd. Notwithstanding the complexities of the border problem between the two sister countries, we continue to be optimistic as to the outcome of negotiations, since both countries are desirous of seeing the talks crowned with success and since good intentions exist on both sides. This makes it easier and possible to resolve problems. Everyone is well aware that factors tending to rapprochement between the two countries outweigh the factors of discord. I can say that my last contact with King Fahd, Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, was positive and that I found him to be aware of the need for fraternity and cooperation between our two countries.

The deplorable situation in Somalia demands that, in addition to what the international forces are doing to establish peace and security there and in addition to international support, further efforts should be deployed to initiate national reconciliation between the various factions. We urge the international community to redouble its efforts at the humanitarian level and we invite the factions in Somalia to rise to the level of their responsibilities and to work on a basis conducive to reconciliation, to reject factionalism and false sensitivities and to see that the country's interests triumph over narrow, factional ones so that it may be possible to rebuild what has been destroyed by that cruel war and pursue the path of development and progress.

Although Yemen previously had the honour of taking part in the efforts deployed to achieve national reconciliation through the Conference held in Djibouti two years ago, and although the national groups in Somalia have not committed themselves to implementing the resolutions of that Conference, we shall spare no effort in working for the desired comprehensive national reconciliation in Somalia. It is only fair to commend here the role performed by our Secretary-General, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, and the interest he takes in the Somalia tragedy. Let us pray that God the all-powerful will guide the leaders of the various factions in Somalia towards reconciliation so that peace may prevail over all parts of that sister country and enable it to work towards reconstruction and development and to resume its place as an active member of the international community.

Any observer who is familiar with the history of the Arab-Israeli conflict in the Middle East region will be certainly aware of the fact that the identity and destiny of Palestine have been at the core of the Arab-Israeli problem from the very outset, and the fuse that detonated the terrible explosion of conflict from as far back as the British mandate. Since then, the Palestinian cause has continued to be the focal point of the conflict, which has lasted for decades and has led to three bloody wars; taken thousands of lives and caused millions to leave their homes; broken apart thousands of families; destroyed property; and caused incalculable losses. Therefore, it is no wonder that the just settlement of the question of Palestine is the key to resolving the conflict and restoring peace.

Our country's prompt support for the agreement between the Palestine Liberation Organization and Israel in Washington on 13 September stemmed from our commitment to the Rabat Arab Summit Conference resolution which recognized the Palestine Liberation Organization as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people as well as our respect for the right of every people to choose its own course and exercise its own will in full freedom. Having said all this, we view the agreement as an important first step towards a just, lasting and comprehensive peace in the region, as was stated by the Council of Ministers of the Arab Nations in Cairo last month. None the less, this step by itself and in itself will not bring about peace unless it is followed by more significant steps at the levels of other Arab-Israeli negotiating tracks. This will depend on Israel's earnestness with regard to withdrawal from all the Palestinian and Arab territories it has continued to occupy since June 1967.

If we tell ourselves that Israel, at long last, has come to the realization that it is unrealistic to hold on to the policy of depending on naked force due to the military superiority it enjoys, as a means of guaranteeing its continued existence, imposing its hegemony over the Arab people in Palestine and the neighbouring Arab States and imposing a peace that would be tantamount to capitulation - I say that if we tell ourselves anything of the sort, we shall be indulging in wishful thinking until such time as Israel demonstrates the truthfulness of its declared intentions and passes the test by adopting sound positions in current and future negotiations with the Syrians, Jordanians and Lebanese and by withdrawing from all the territories it now occupies. It must also accept the establishment of the independent State of Palestine, which would include Gaza and the West Bank, with Jerusalem as its capital, while the Republic of Yemen appreciates the important role played by the two co-sponsors of the Arab-Israeli negotiations and, in particular, the role of the United States of America, it hopes that this role will be such as to prompt Israel to abandon the policy of force and arrogance which it has pursued out of its feelings of military superiority, and because of the international support and protection it has always enjoyed as well as the special treatment extended to it by the Western Powers. It is time the States of the world at large, and in particular the United States, shouldered the responsibility of curbing Israeli arrogance, especially after the crimes, killings, acts of intimidation and terrorization, the bombings, destruction and atrocities it has perpetrated for decades in Palestine and other Arab countries. Those are acts that will shame mankind for a long time to come and that will torture the human conscience.

We do hope that the Gaza-Jericho agreement between the PLO and Israel and the agenda between Jordan and Israel will be accompanied by Israeli-Syrian agreements and Israeli-Lebanese agreements in the near future. This

should lead to the return of the Golan to Syria and to Israel's withdrawal from southern Lebanon. We also hope that such agreements will be followed by others that would lead to Israel's total withdrawal from all the Palestinian territories, including Al-Quds and all the other Arab territories that are still under occupation. It is also our hope that the Israeli authorities will finally desist from the arbitrary measures and acts of criminality against all our brethren in Palestine, in Lebanon and in the other occupied territories. If the battle for peace has been joined, it shall not be won unless Israel shows a great deal of courage, abandons its arrogance and realizes that this is the most difficult battle of all.

The end of the cold war and the emergence of the beginnings of a new international order that is beginning to take shape to rid the world of wars and conflicts require that lasting, total peace should prevail in the Middle Eastern region on a fair and stable basis so that its peoples may tackle the task of development and improve their standards of living. This requires that all the States and peoples of the world should take a firm stand in opposing any attempt to create obstacles in the path of peace, or to impose peace by force. Our world will not enjoy peace until peace embraces every part of the globe.

Like many other countries, Yemen has followed with deep concern the attacks against southern Lebanon and the Bekaa Valley by Israel in the month of July, in full sight of the international community. Yemen, while stressing the importance of respecting Lebanon's independence, territorial integrity and sovereignty and safeguarding its right to live within recognized international borders, condemns Israel's continued occupation of southern Lebanon, and demands unconditional Israeli withdrawal from southern Lebanon in implementation of Security Council resolution 425 (1978). The international community should take a firm stand in order to compel Israel to refrain from these acts of aggression and to compensate the people of Lebanon for the enormous losses they have sustained.

It is inadmissible, illegal and immoral for peoples, on the eve of the twenty-first century, to suffer from injustice and to be exposed to physical liquidation for ethnic or religious reasons. The most horrendous example of this is the case of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The United Nations, since it was created, has never faced a more serious challenge than the one that confronts it now in that peaceful European Muslim country. It is very difficult indeed to understand the stance of the international community with regard to that situation. In practice, all the slogans have turned out to be no more than hot air. Developments in Bosnia and Herzegovina squarely put a heavy burden of guilt on the shoulders of the international community and especially the major Powers, with regard to the collective massacring of Muslims at the hands of the Serb and Croat fascists. As long as we, as an international community, continue to fail to face up to such a situation, and to safeguard the right to life of the unarmed people of Bosnia and Herzegovina, how could we pretend to champion human rights on this planet? In the most restrained terms, we can only say that the world's stance *vis-à-vis* what is happening in Bosnia and Herzegovina will be a stigma, a brand of Cain on the brow of the age and of the human race, for all eternity.

Consequently, this blatant defiance calls for practical measures by the international community to deter aggression, to intensify moral support and humanitarian assistance and to strengthen the steadfastness of the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina with a view to ending this tragedy. We in Yemen join the other countries of the world in calling for an end to this aggression that Belgrade supports, and for a halt to the genocidal atrocities perpetrated by the Serb aggressors in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

We support the request by the Non-Aligned Movement for the venue of the negotiations to be moved from Geneva to United Nations Headquarters here in New York as those negotiations are now at a critical juncture, and moving them to New York would strengthen the parties' confidence, especially that of the Bosnia and Herzegovina side, which is the party that has to make the biggest sacrifice.

The World Conference on Human Rights held in Vienna in June 1993 has studied the question of human rights, reviewed the fundamental precepts relating to those rights and underscored the need to implement them and to provide humanitarian assistance to the victims of war and natural disasters. Unfortunately, many of the tragic situations which afflict people arise from certain crises and political conflicts that degenerate into armed confrontations. The use of force and economic blockades that ensue result in untold suffering for innocent civilians, especially the most vulnerable, namely, women, children and the elderly, who are always the principal victims of such wars and blockades.

The situation in South Africa continues to be cause for concern for most Member States of this Organization. The latest news does not justify too much optimism. Over

the past two months, there have been several massacres and killings. That is why the most recent events should prompt us - and the United Nations - to monitor this situation closely so that the goals contained in the 14 December 1989 United Nations Declaration on Apartheid and its Destructive Consequences in Southern Africa may be implemented.

The decision to deploy a peace-keeping force in South Africa, a decision that has been welcomed by Inkatha, is a major step in leaving behind the cycle of violence, murder and massacre in the country, and may well make it possible to establish a democratic and non-racial regime. Here we should like to emphasize the importance of having all the parties understand the need for peace, especially in view of the forthcoming democratic, non-racial elections scheduled for next year. We hope that the elections will be successful, and that they will mark a positive turning-point.

Just a few days ago, we had the honour of hearing Mr. Nelson Mandela address the Special Committee against Apartheid, and we could feel his confidence in the future. We hope that the dialogue that has now begun in South Africa will make it possible to establish a democratic, non-racial regime.

The Secretary-General, in his annual report on the activities of the United Nations, declared that political progress and economic development are inseparable. Yemen believes that, to revitalize economic growth in the developing countries and enable those countries to continue their political and economic adjustment programmes, the donor countries and the industrialized countries must provide economic and technical support, and the United Nations must continue to play its role in promoting cooperation between the developing and the industrialized countries in order to achieve the objective of economic integration on an equitable basis. It is also important to lighten the poor countries' debt burdens, to increase financial flows towards them and to provide them with technical assistance in order to enable them to continue their programmes of adjustment and to achieve economic and social development.

As underscored by the meeting of the Ministerial committee for the economic development of the countries of the Non-Aligned Movement held last May in Bali, Indonesia, the economic situation in the developing countries has worsened. World economic growth is suffering from a grave imbalance and the gap between the developing and the developed countries has widened. The economic recession has led to the growth of protectionism and declining development assistance. Furthermore, the increase in indebtedness and the burdens of debt servicing have resulted in capital outflows in the case of the developing countries. This is a situation that threatens the very existence of those countries and not only the prospects of economic and social development. We must refer in this respect to failure by the industrialized countries to honour their commitments in line with the agreements, strategies and international resolutions relating to the inflows of development assistance to the developing countries, especially those included in the international strategy for the eighties which called for the allocation by the industrialized countries of 0.7 per cent of their Gross National Product to development assistance. Instead of implementing those resolutions, the industrialized countries have resisted every attempt to formulate and adopt a new strategy for the 1990s. They have also failed to implement the programme for the 1990s that had been agreed upon at the Paris Conference. This has been a real setback for the economic and social development of the least developed countries.

We do say that the principal responsibility for development lies with the developing countries themselves, but national efforts alone are not enough: there must also be a degree of international support and assistance. National efforts must be backed up by appropriate international efforts.

We feel that the international economic system must be fair and equitable towards the developing countries. This cannot be the so without political will, wisdom and courage.

A great deal of work awaits the United Nations, and this is why this session of the General Assembly is of special importance. The international community must avail itself of this opportunity to develop a concept of cooperation between countries, within the framework of the United Nations, with a view to strengthening international peace and security and economic stability the world over. This should also help to strengthen the Organization, because the Organization is the ideal framework for building that world of peace and stability on the basis of international legality.

In this connection, the United Nations must implement the Charter without selectivity or double standards, for the Charter is the ideal framework for coordinating international efforts. As the international community must build a better world within the framework of the United

Nations to ensure peace and development, we, the family of nations, must have the foresight and resolve to face up to the problems that arise with the universal character of the United Nations in mind.

Mr. ROBERTSON (Jamaica): Mr. President, it gives me great pleasure to see you, a son of the Caribbean, presiding over the General Assembly at this forty-eight session with the skill, competence and wealth of experience we have come to associate with you. My delegation is confident that under your leadership this session of the General Assembly will complete its vitally important agenda.

I also wish to express to your predecessor, His Excellency Mr. Stoyan Ganev of Bulgaria, our appreciation for the most able manner in which he presided over the forty-seventh session.

May I take this opportunity also to welcome formally to the United Nations the six countries - the Czech Republic, Eritrea, Monaco, the Slovak Republic, The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, and Andorra - which joined the Organization this year.

Today the global community is at a crossroads in history, poised between the prospect of peaceful economic progress through globalization and technological advancement and a relapse into conflict fuelled by poverty, political tyranny and ethnic strife. This situation has emerged with the end of the cold war, which has ushered in ideological *détente*, and where the threat of nuclear conflict between super-Powers has receded. This is not, however, a cause for complacency, because unsupervised economic globalization coupled with an escalation of political fragmentation could ignite fierce conflict between economic blocs and social groups world wide. The present dilemma is how we can capitalize collectively on the advantage offered by economic globalization, while avoiding political fragmentation owing to the resurgence of religious and ethnic intolerance and chauvinistic nationalism.

Globalization, if not complemented by a comprehensive global economic framework, could lead to wider disparities between developed and developing countries, leaving a growing portion of the world's population mired in poverty as entire productive sectors and economic activities are marginalized from the dynamic of economic growth in the world economy. The United Nations is the only forum that can forge a global institutional consensus, a multilateral regulatory regime, and commonly subscribe to goals and understandings that will reduce the tendency to economic inequities. A shared economic development consensus could provide the basis for more equitable participation for the less developed countries.

Whether mankind succeeds in seizing the present opportunity for peace and economic progress depends crucially on the United Nations as a mechanism for a new global dialogue based on genuine partnership between States with widely differing philosophies, policies and practices. The United Nations, with severe constraints of financial and human resources, has in the past year courageously attempted to meet these challenges, understandably with mixed results.

We therefore wish to pay tribute to the Secretary-General and his dedicated staff of professionals who have played a critical role in the search for resolution of bitter conflicts in every region - conflicts which have inflicted massive human suffering and devastation of the land.

In Cambodia, elections have taken place and a new Government has been installed. That achievement in Cambodia will, we hope, mark the beginning of a new era of peace and stability in South-East Asia.

On the African continent, we welcome the signing of the Cotonou Peace Agreement on 25 July, and we urge that all the parties to the conflict in Liberia remain committed to this Agreement and work with the United Nations and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) to bring lasting peace to that country. Unfortunately, the situation in Somalia continues to be tragic and dangerous. We hope that, through the efforts of the United Nations Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM) and others, there will be a speedy return of peace to this land fractured and devastated by civil strife. Jamaica regrets the continuing loss of life of members of the UNOSOM forces.

Developments in South Africa are moving in a positive direction. We welcome the decision to hold, on 27 April 1994, elections open to all parties which will mark the transition of South Africa to a democratic and non-racial society, and we eagerly anticipate the establishment of the Transitional Executive Council. The call by Mr. Mandela for the removal of sanctions is a welcome one. Jamaica has participated in building consensus for the United Nations resolution to lift

sanctions, and it intends to lift them immediately upon the adoption of the resolution.

The situation in the States of the former Yugoslavia is also an agonizing chronicle of tragic strife, suffering and abuses. We continue to hope for a just settlement on the basis of Security Council resolution 859 (1993), which affirms the fundamental principles on which such a settlement should be based.

Jamaica too hails the signing of the peace accord between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization on 13 September 1993, while fully recognizing that the progress achieved, despite its significance, is but an initial step. Indeed, there are complex matters that will face negotiators in the months and years ahead.

Nearer to home, in the Caribbean, the Government of Jamaica and its partners in the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) have placed the resolution of the Haitian crisis high among their priorities. CARICOM has been actively involved at the United Nations in the effort to bring the issue of Haiti before the Security Council, and I express my Government's appreciation to the member States of the Latin American and Caribbean Group for their support in this process.

We also commend the Special Envoy of the Secretaries-General of the United Nations and the Organization of American States, Mr. Dante Caputo, for his untiring commitment to this issue. However, in the light of the grim evidence that dangerous elements are at work in Haiti, clearly determined to deny the Haitian people security, democracy and development, the international community cannot relax its vigilance. President Jean-Bertrand Aristide is scheduled to return to Haiti on 30 October. His return will mark the beginning of a long and difficult period of reconstruction. He will need the full support and commitment of our Organization, as well as of the entire international community. There is urgency in the call for economic and technical assistance. Indeed, the Government of Jamaica has already offered, within our means, to provide Haiti with some technical assistance.

This new era following the cold war presents mankind with new opportunities for a more rational and equitable management of problems at the global level. I refer, in particular, to the struggle against poverty and ethnic strife, human-rights violations and environmental degradation. The end of cold-war confrontations - political as well as military and ideological - should not be replaced by economic conflict. We must grasp the opportunity for constructive action and now work towards an era of cooperation that is not distorted by ideological and political tensions.

The Security Council Summit meeting on 31 January 1992 concluded with a statement in which it was said that its members recognized

> "that peace and prosperity are indivisible and that lasting peace and stability require effective international cooperation for the eradication of poverty and the promotion of a better life for all in larger freedom". *(S/23500, p. 5)*

We strongly support that view.

For many developing countries, including my own, market-oriented reforms have been a high priority. We have made fundamental changes in economic policy, including monetary and fiscal austerity, trade liberalization, divestment of public enterprises to the private sector, liberalization of foreign-exchange markets and general deregulation of economies. In short, we have undertaken a thoroughgoing process of structural adjustment, which has created a private-sector-led, market-driven economy.

For countries that are undertaking economic structural adjustment the social consequences are high indeed. Tight monetary and fiscal management reduces the capacity to provide basic social services, such as health, education and housing. Yet, if human needs are not adequately met, if human resources are not developed, we destroy the very basis of sustained development: our people. Migration - national and international - is one of the clearest manifestations of social ills. If people do not find economic security in their native land, they go wherever they can find it - from rural to urban area; from one country or one continent to another. So today there are some 35 million displaced persons. And such people are to be found in every region.

The processes of structural adjustment are rendered extremely difficult in the absence of sustained international support - either directly, through the sustained infusion of external resources by way of development assistance and debt relief, or indirectly, through reduced protectionism in industrialized countries. Let me give an example related to debt. Although my Government has managed to reduce the stock of external debt, debt servicing remains the most debilitating constraint on the country's economic development. The fact that international financial

institutions, to which much of Jamaica's debt is owed, refuse to consider the rescheduling of loans continues to be a major concern of my Government. The consequence of this policy is that even those resources generated by developing countries themselves are not available for the pursuit of national development objectives, as they are pre-empted by debt-servicing.

I should like to refer to trade liberalization and trade arrangements, especially with regard to countries undergoing structural adjustment. In my own region, the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) has put in place mechanisms to enhance regional trade. At the same time, however, the Community is faced with the Herculean task of avoiding or minimizing the likely short-term to medium-term adverse impacts on its members of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) when it takes effect. We have had to make vigorous efforts to ensure that the gains achieved under existing agreements are not eroded.

Similarly, conditionality applied to loans by international financial institutions must be designed to be more appropriate to developing economies. More specifically, adjustment must take place over an extended period, must minimize social distress and must be growth-oriented.

My delegation therefore attaches great importance to the formulation of an agenda for development. That process should proceed with the sense of urgency and vision with which the undeniably constructive "Agenda for Peace" has been promoted. Such an agenda must be forward-looking and must address fully the wide range of issues pertaining to development, taking into account the specific circumstances and needs of developing countries and groups of countries. It must first establish, as its basic premise, the need for a favourable international economic environment and a non-discriminatory trading system, the latter being dependent on a speedy, balanced and comprehensive outcome to the Uruguay Round of trade negotiations. Without these conditions, the efforts of developing countries to build self-sustaining economies - efforts often accompanied by painful adjustment strategies and difficult economic-liberalization programmes - will be frustrated.

The need for a constructive North-South dialogue to be reactivated has therefore become urgent, and has certainly become one of the most pressing challenges we face in elaborating our agenda for development. We were consequently appreciative of the initiative taken by the Chairman of the Non-Aligned Movement to meet with the Chairman of the Group of 7 in Tokyo. We regard this as an encouraging beginning.

The agenda for development cannot be complete if it does not include consideration of the problem of external indebtedness and formulation of specific solutions for its resolution. A review of the role and functions of the Bretton Woods institutions is therefore necessary. Similarly, the reality and inevitability of regional economic integration processes must be confronted in the agenda for development, as well as the protection of the environment, following the ground-breaking achievements of the historic United Nations Conference on Environment and Development last year in Rio de Janeiro.

The goal of sustainable development provides a holistic framework for the United Nations and its Member States to shape a world in which care and respect for human beings is equalled only by care and respect for the planet which we inhabit. At the Earth Summit in Rio, we undertook to implement measures that would safeguard our natural habitat. Some of the decisions taken in Rio have already begun to take effect. These include the establishment of the Commission on Sustainable Development and the preparations for the convening of the first Global Conference on Sustainable Development of Small Island States. My delegation wishes to stress the importance of this Conference, which is to be held in Barbados next year. We take this opportunity to call upon the Members of the Assembly to give full support to the adoption by the Conference of a plan of action for the sustainable development of small island developing States. This will be the first test of our readiness and commitment to implement the decisions taken at the Earth Summit.

Equally, Jamaica fully supports the World Conference on Population and Development, to be held in Cairo in 1994; the World Summit for Social Development, to be held in Copenhagen in 1995; and the Fourth World Conference on Women, to be held in Beijing in 1995.

It gives me great pleasure to allude to the 1982 law of the sea Convention, which was signed in Montego Bay, Jamaica, 11 years ago and has now been ratified by 58 countries. I expect that before the end of this forty-eighth session of the General Assembly the sixtieth ratification will be deposited with the Secretary-General, thus setting the stage for the Convention's entry into force. There can be no question that support for the Convention continues to be overwhelming. Our ultimate goal must be to achieve universal participation in a Convention which is designed

for mankind as a whole. It is therefore appropriate that all the Convention as soon as possible. As the pace of ratification intensifies, it could serve as a catalyst for deepening the process of universalizing the Convention by addressing creatively the manner in which the provisions of the Convention are to be implemented on an ongoing, contemporary basis.

We must pay a tribute, as well, to the Secretary-General and his predecessor for the initiative they took to promote a dialogue aimed at addressing issues of concern to some States in order to achieve universal participation in the Convention. The integrity of the Convention as a whole must be maintained, and our search for universality must recognize the overwhelming support for the Convention by the international community as a whole and the need to preserve its fundamental aspects. Let us therefore in our noble quest for universality concentrate on the manner of the implementation of the Convention in those areas of concern to some States.

If the United Nations is to play an active and dynamic role in promoting a new global partnership, it must examine its capacity and capability. For that reason, my delegation agrees that the reform processes now under way should aim at maximizing the efficiency and effectiveness of the Organization. Further, my delegation intends to participate fully in the work of the open-ended ad hoc working group which will continue to consider the process of revitalizing the General Assembly. Other discussions related to the restructuring of the United Nations system must be transparent and informed by the principles of democracy and the rules of international law and by those principles enshrined in the Charter.

My Government wishes to address the issue of the Security Council in the context of the increased membership of the United Nations, which rose to 184 this year. The surging tide of change over the past five years has seen the responsibilities of the Security Council increase, with the establishment of 17 peace-keeping operations and the Council's further involvement in conflict resolution through the good offices of the Secretary-General and the dispatch of fact-finding missions. The time has therefore obviously come for a review of the Security Council's composition to ensure that it is truly representative of the increased membership of the United Nations and reflects the democratic principle on which the United Nations is founded - that is, the sovereign equality of all States.

The reform process in which we are now engaged within the United Nations must clearly include the Security Council, the body charged with the responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. A Security Council which is truly representative and functions effectively has to be a priority for all of us, because peace and security, in the military and political sense, are interwoven with our economic and social security. We in the Caribbean cannot, and have no desire to, remain aloof from this debate. We must ensure that a strengthened United Nations is placed in a position to play a dominant role in the elaboration of processes of peace and development and in their implementation based on genuine interdependence, global partnership and shared responsibility.

We are gathered here because we all have pressing national concerns and we believe there remains an enduring faith in multilateralism, which carries the potential for stronger, more broadly based development over the longer term, if only all players agree to reaffirm their commitment and play fully their roles within the global framework of cooperation.

There is no doubt that this will be difficult, but shared objectives, shared commitment and shared responsibilities will ensure a better world for all mankind. As we contemplate the challenges posed by the present global, economic and political environment, we must commit ourselves to a new dialogue within the United Nations system to forge a global partnership for peace, democracy and economic progress.

Mr. AL-SAHAF (Iraq) *(interpretation from Arabic)*: Allow me to begin by extending to you, Sir, my sincere congratulations on your election as President of the General Assembly at its forty-eighth session. I am confident that your solid diplomatic background and rich experience will effectively contribute to the success of the work of this session.

More than ever before, our Organization today needs cooperation between its Member States if it is to save itself from attempts to divert its course from the spirit and principles of its Charter and thereby turn it into a tool for serving the selfish interests of certain dominant Powers, first among which is the United States of America.

The world has attached great importance to the end of the bipolarity that overshadowed the international situation

until recently and restricted the ability of the United Nations to address and resolve international problems. The new era, however, has failed to provide the United Nations with the opportunity to apply the principles, objectives and mechanisms of the Charter. A single Power - the United States of America - has sought to control the manner in which the United Nations addresses international issues and to steer it in accordance with United States interests.

The selectivity and double standard that characterize the role currently played by the United Nations make it crystal clear that the United Nations and the Security Council in particular have become tools that execute the policies of the Powers that dominate the Organization. The United Nations is no longer a world Organization capable of resolving the problems and addressing the crises which beset many countries and peoples of the world in a manner that is consonant with the objectives and principles of its own Charter.

Mr. Kabir (Bangladesh), Vice-President, took the Chair.

What did the Security Council ever do to implement its resolution 487 (1981), on the military aggression perpetrated by Israel against an Iraqi nuclear reactor devoted to peaceful purposes? That resolution was adopted 12 years ago and the Security Council has done absolutely nothing to implement it. Indeed, we have reached the point today at which the Israeli Deputy Defence Minister, Mordechai Gur, can arrogantly declare, as he did on 6 June 1993, that Israel does possess nuclear weapons and that it has the capacity to bomb the Arab States with those devices. At the same time, Israel continues to adamantly refuse to sign the non-proliferation Treaty and the United Nations and the Security Council have done absolutely nothing to halt the Israeli programmes of mass destruction weapons, which include the production and stockpiling of nuclear, biological and chemical weapons together with the means of their delivery, regardless of the fact that those programmes constitute a grave threat to the security and stability of the region and the whole world.

While the United Nations is being forced to engage in a military operation in Somalia under the pretext of providing humanitarian assistance, the United Nations stands helpless and incapable of taking any appropriate action to put an end to the carnage or to alleviate the bitter human suffering in Bosnia and Herzegovina and other parts of former Yugoslavia. This paralysis takes place against the backdrop of the shifting tides of the positions of the dominant Powers in line with their own selfish interests and schemes and their backing away from any measure that would help in reaching a solution or put an end to this tragedy.

Because of the climate prevailing in the international community - a climate of selectivity and double standards - the gap between North and South continues to widen at the expense of the interests of the developing countries and Iraq finds itself in a situation that has never been witnessed before by any other founding State Member of the United Nations. This is due to the complications and unfair treatment meted to Iraq by the resolutions of the Security Council under pressure exerted by the United States of America and its hegemonistic policies towards others.

The most telling example of the hegemony exercised by the United States of America over the United Nations and of United States monopoly of the interpretation and implementation of the provisions of the Charter, and use of the mechanisms related thereto in the service of purely American rather than common international interests, is what has been done and continues to be done to Iraq at a time when it has declared its commitment to the resolutions of the Security Council which it fully implements. In return, Iraq continues to be subjected to acts of aggression which threaten its security and territorial integrity and infringe upon its sovereignty.

Iraq also remains deprived of its natural right to obtain its needs, including those described in international legal terms as basic human and civilian needs. Those needs are essential for the people of Iraq if they are to continue to lead a normal life. Iraq also remains deprived of the right to export its natural resources while its assets remain frozen. Iraq continues to be denied the right to use its civil aircraft and ships and continues to be subjected to flagrant military intervention in its internal affairs, to daily acts of violation of its airspace, and to the perpetration of a declared conspiracy against its political system.

Iraq has endeavoured, despite all these adverse circumstances and difficulties, to contain the crises which certain powers have so skilfully orchestrated in order to perpetrate further aggression against Iraq and create pretexts for continuing to impose the iniquitous comprehensive blockade against it. Within the framework of Iraq's serious, continuous attempts to reveal the truth, close the door on the forces of ill-intent and expose their objectives, and driven by its desire to find solutions to the outstanding issues through a serious responsible dialogue based on justice and fairness and consistent with international law and the United Nations Charter, Iraq has

called, in a letter dated 30 May 1993 from the Foreign Minister of Iraq to the President of the Security Council, for constructive and comprehensive dialogue with the Security Council within the framework of the legal and practical interrelationship between Iraq's implementation of its obligations and the text of resolution 687 (1991) on the one hand, and the Security Council's implementation of its own obligations towards Iraq according to the provisions of the said resolution, particularly paragraphs 21 and 22, on the other.

Iraq calls for the Security Council to adopt fair and just positions which would reflect the Council's respect for its own obligations and commitments as enshrined in the United Nations Charter, and thereby to respect the sovereignty, independence, internal security and territorial integrity of Iraq, lift the unjust blockade that has been imposed upon the people of Iraq for three years now, and which has inflicted, and continues to inflict, untold suffering upon them and to lift all the restrictions that are still imposed without justification on normal, legitimate Iraqi activities.

Iraq has cooperated objectively with all the inspection teams and missions dispatched by the United Nations, in order to fulfil its obligations according to the resolutions of the Security Council, regardless of how unjust and indeed how extremely iniquitous those resolutions are. In fact many of the officials of those teams and missions have confirmed that Iraq has honoured its obligations in implementation of the Security Council resolutions.

May I refer here, by way of example, to the statement made by the United Nations Special Commission (UNSCOM) Executive Chairman, Mr. Rolf Ekeus, on 13 January 1993, in which he said, "Iraq's compliance has been a success so far, and it would be tragic if the last 5 per cent of implementation could not to be carried out." Earlier, on 2 September 1992, Mr. Maurizio Zifferero, the head of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) inspection team, said, "Iraq's nuclear programme stands at zero now."

Convinced that Iraq has met all its obligations under resolution 687 (1991), we called upon the Security Council, both as a collective body and as individual Member States, just as we had long been calling upon the Special Commission, to conduct a technical, professional and legal dialogue with Iraq in order to specify the extent to which resolution 687 (1991) in general, and section C thereof in particular, have been implemented, so that the Council may consider implementing paragraphs 21 and 22 of the resolution, which pertain to the lifting of the economic sanctions imposed on Iraq. The dialogue proposed by Iraq was also meant to strip away all the pretexts that have continued to be used to mask the illegal and aggressive measures unilaterally taken by certain individual States against Iraq and its territorial integrity. The most flagrant of those measures are the so-called "no-fly zones" imposed on northern and southern Iraq and the military acts of aggression perpetrated by the United States against Iraq on 17 January 1993 and 27 June 1993.

When the Security Council responded, in July 1993, to our call for dialogue and sent the Executive Chairman of the Special Commission to Baghdad to conduct talks with the Iraqi side, we welcomed the visit and held intensive, frank and constructive discussions with Mr. Ekeus, through which we reached an agreement to resolve a number of issues and to continue our dialogue in earnest on grounds that are just, fair, logical and consistent with international law and the United Nations Charter.

We presented to Mr. Ekeus, and through him to the Security Council, a position paper clearly expressing the way in which Iraq envisages the relationship between Iraq's responsibilities towards the Security Council and its resolutions, on the one hand, and the responsibilities of the Security Council, both as a body and as Member States, towards Iraq's firm rights and legitimate demands, foremost among which are the following: to respect the sovereignty, internal security and dignity of the people and State of Iraq; to guarantee Iraq's right to development and to industrial, scientific and technological progress; to implement paragraph 22 of Security Council resolution 687 (1991), pertaining to the lifting of the embargo on Iraq now that Iraq has accomplished what is required of it under the provisions of section C of that resolution; to work in earnest towards the implementation of paragraph 14 of resolution 687 (1991), pertaining to the establishment in the Middle East of a zone free of weapons of mass destruction and the means of their delivery and to bring to an immediate end the so-called "no-fly zones" imposed on northern and southern Iraq, which constitute an illegal use of armed force by three permanent member States of the Security Council, aimed at interfering in the internal affairs of a Member State of the United Nations.

Iraq reiterated its positive positions and its desire for dialogue during the meetings held last month here in New York by the Iraqi high-level technical delegation. We have also endeavoured to ensure that this positive spirit prevails in the current round of meetings which started in Baghdad on 2 October 1993. We look forward to seeing this round

succeed in solving all outstanding issues in a complete and final manner so that the Security Council may begin in earnest to implement paragraph 22 of resolution 687 (1991) which states that the Security Council:

> "Decides that upon the approval by the Security Council of the programme called for in paragraph 19 above and upon Council agreement that Iraq has completed all actions contemplated in paragraphs 8, 9, 10, 11, 12 and 13 above, the prohibitions against the import of commodities and products originating in Iraq and the prohibitions against financial transactions related thereto contained in resolution 661 (1990) shall have no further force or effect".

In view of these developments, and in order for the principles of justice and equity and of the mutuality of rights and obligations between Iraq and the Security Council to prevail, we hereby call upon all countries of the world to support our initiative for dialogue and understanding between the Council and Iraq so that such dialogue may lead without delay to the lifting of the unjust and iniquitous blockade imposed on our country, and thereby to put an end to the methods of coercion, threats and aggression being used against our country.

We also call upon the countries of the world to urge the Security Council, both as a collective body and as individual Member States, to consider Iraq's legitimate demands as expressed in the Iraqi position paper submitted to the Security Council in July 1993. The paper deals with the most important issues, especially respect for Iraq's sovereignty, internal security and territorial integrity, the lifting of the iniquitous blockade, the removal of the "no-fly zones" illegally imposed on parts of Iraq and abstaining from any further aggression against Iraq.

The people of Iraq are being subjected to inhumane policies and practices that have further aggravated their suffering which increases from one day to the next. The domination by the United States and its allies over the activities of the Sanctions Committee, which was set up in accordance with Security Council resolution 661 (1990), has made that Committee hostage to premeditated political objectives and ill intentions against Iraq and its people. The Committee has ignored the basic civilian and human needs of the Iraqi people to the extent that it has refused to allow Iraq to obtain much needed medical supplies as well as equipment and educational supplies for its schools. The Committee has gone as far as to consider paint for school desks and blackboards as well as ink as proscribed materials that the Iraqi people should not be permitted to obtain.

In refusing to grant the permission to obtain any of those essential civilian requirements, it resorts to flimsy pretexts and unacceptable justifications. For instance, the Committee has refused to allow pencils and notebooks to be supplied to Iraq's schoolchildren, claiming that the quantity requested was too large. The Committee has also rejected a request for the supply of medical equipment, beds and air-conditioning systems for Iraqi hospitals. The reason given for that refusal was that the end user was not known. What irony! The Sanctions Committee has refused to allow water purification materials to be supplied to Iraq, rejected a request submitted by a company for the reconstruction of a factory producing medical syringes in Iraq and refused to allow the importation of spare parts for a baby-food factory in Iraq under the pretext that such spare parts would contribute to the expansion of the country's industrial capability.

The practices of a limited number of Member States in the Sanctions Committee which seems to have inherited the veto privilege under the cover of general consensus, have demonstrated beyond all doubt that the embargo is geared towards destroying Iraqi society with premeditated persistence and through organized and calculated efforts driven by political motives that are contrary to all values, laws and norms acceptable to the international community now or in the past.

The war of destruction launched against Iraq by the United States and its allies, the continued imposition of the comprehensive blockade and the denial of Iraq's right to export its oil and use its frozen assets in foreign banks have all combined to make Iraq unable to provide even the most elementary of its people's basic humanitarian needs, such as food and medication. The result has been a huge increase in mortality among children and the elderly, due to the grave shortage of medicines. On top of all its other difficulties in various fields, Iraq suffers from, for example, an acute shortage of medicines for the treatment of cancer, kidney problems, heart disease, diabetes, blood pressure disorders, eye diseases, diarrhoea, tuberculosis and other serious diseases. Over the months that have elapsed in 1993, tuberculosis-related fatalities among children have risen by 81 times over the figure registered for the corresponding period in 1989; and this is but one example.

I do not wish to elaborate on the difficult humanitarian conditions of the Iraqi people. The reports by the various missions and agencies of the United Nations have warned against the dangerous results of the deteriorating food and health situation brought upon the Iraqi people as a result of the blockade.

The most recent of those reports is Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) document 237, issued in July 1993 under the title "Special Warning". This document depicts the deterioration of Iraq's food situation as a result of the difficulties facing the agricultural sector because of acute shortages of equipment and pesticides and the spread of agricultural epidemics. The FAO report also points out that the economic sanctions imposed upon Iraq have led to the spread of deprivation on a massive scale, thus exposing the vast majority of the Iraqi population to acute food shortages and malnutrition, particularly children under five years of age. The report also states that the economic blockade has practically paralysed the country's economy and led to continued deprivation and the spread of massive human suffering.

Not content with its military aggression against Iraq on 17 January 1991 or with all the inhuman practices it has pursued against the Iraqi people, the United States of America has continued to perpetuate direct and unilateral acts of military aggression against Iraq under various false pretexts and flimsy justifications. In addition to the first colossal aggression of 1991, the United States perpetrated two further acts of aggression against Iraq's civilian population and civilian installations on 17 January 1993 and 27 June 1993. These two additional acts of aggression resulted in the loss of many innocent civilian lives among children, women and elderly people.

As a permanent member of the Security Council, the United States of America has a double responsibility to abide by international law and the United Nations Charter. The United States should be the last country to resort to the use of force in resolving disputes, yet it perpetrated aggression against Iraq on the basis of unfounded and absurd allegations that there was a conspiracy against the life of the former United States President. In so doing, the United States Government justified its action by a twisted interpretation of Article 51 of the United Nations Charter that was totally alien to that article's letter and spirit.

This behaviour constitutes a grave escalation of a policy that has been and will certainly continue to be a threat to international peace and security, a policy that violates the right of States to self-defence, as enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations. The behaviour of the United States, in particular its aggression of 27 June 1993, has met with rejection and condemnation from many countries round the world, including some allies of the United States itself.

As regards the issue of human rights, Iraq proceeds from a complete belief in those rights and in the fact that respect for, and protection of, human rights remains an unquestionable element upon which the internal structure of society is established and an element that contributes positively to the establishment of peace and justice at the international level. It is on the basis of such conviction and such understanding that Iraq has acceded to many international covenants on human rights. Iraq has also honoured its obligations by submitting regular reports regarding the situation of human rights. While we realize that many positive developments have taken place in the field of human rights, reflecting the widespread recognition of their importance, a recognition further cemented by legal provisions in the various international covenants, these developments have not been accompanied, in terms of real application, by an earnest endeavour to help create the right climate for the declared legal provisions to be implemented in accordance with the greatly varying circumstances prevailing in various States, according to each one's cultural background, religious beliefs and level of progress and development. On the contrary: it can be seen that the concept of human rights has become a weapon used by certain States possessing the means of influence with which to exert discriminatory pressure on other States for selfish political objectives and interests rather than for the realization of common objectives and interests of the international community. What is particularly worrying to us is the neglect shown towards basic rights upheld by the international community and declared as governing principles such as the right to self-determination, the right to development, the right of States to respect for their sovereignty, stability and territorial integrity as well as non-interference in their internal affairs.

The great challenges facing the United Nations put the Organization at a decisive crossroads, beyond which we shall see the will of the international community either totally paralysed under the influence of dominant Powers, or searching for an outlet through an endeavour to restore balance to the mechanisms governing the process of decision-making and decision-implementation in the various United Nations agencies, with a view to ensuring the effectiveness of the Organization and guaranteeing its ability to resolve international problems in accordance with rules of fairness, justice and international law, as well as ensuring the revitalization of the role of the United Nations on the basis of compatible and unified concepts and criteria and away from double standards.

The enhancement of the United Nations ability to maintain peace requires, above all, strict adherence to the objectives and principles of the Charter, particularly the principles of the sovereign equality of States, the right of peoples to self-determination, to non-interference in the internal affairs of States and to observance of the rules of international law.

Iraq, as a founding Member of the United Nations, is extremely anxious that the Organization's name and emblem remain worthy of respect and continue to be regarded as a beacon of hope by all peoples of the world. We believe that membership in the Security Council should go hand in hand with the new realities brought about by the increased membership of the United Nations, and that this should be done in a manner that would bring about a more equitable and balanced representation of all United Nations Member States. The Council should abide by the principles of clarity and openness in its decision-making process; it should also operate with due regard to respect for the sovereign rights of all States.

My country supports the thesis put forth by the Secretary-General in his report "An Agenda for Peace" regarding the importance of the role assigned to the General Assembly by the United Nations Charter, especially in the field of the maintenance of international peace and security.

The achievement of the United Nations objectives requires that the mechanisms of the General Assembly should be strengthened within the framework of its spheres of competence stipulated by the Charter and that this should be done through discussion and the adoption of resolutions on subjects of international importance.

The strength and vitality of the United Nations are closely linked to the extent of participation by its Member States in the process of decision-making and to their equitable representation in the various specialized organs and agencies.

The United Nations Secretary-General, in his report "An Agenda for Peace", highlights the fundamental fact that social peace is just as important as strategic and political peace. He stresses that peace cannot be guaranteed within the framework of narrow military concept, as there are several economic and environmental factors that play their part in the maintenance of peace and that those factors can themselves become the fuel for the eruption of conflicts and wars between peoples.

The need to maintain international peace and security puts the United Nations face to face with the responsibility of removing the causes of conflict in which economic factors play the vital role.

If it is said today that the world has put the dangers of the cold war behind it, we must remind ourselves that our world faces very real dangers that arise from the grave deterioration in the world economic situation, particularly the bitter suffering of the developing countries, their increasing poverty and the frustration of their development programmes.

The gap has been growing wider and wider between the rich industrial North and the poor South which is seeking an opportunity for survival as it witnesses the prices of its basic commodities tumble, its foreign trade deteriorate, and its resources become prey to plunder and extortion.

Peace is a concept that cannot be divided. It is a fundamental right for mankind, recognized by all religions as well as by international covenants. That indivisible concept of peace must combine all dimensions, especially the economic which, if missing, exposes the international community to grave problems and dangerous conflicts.

To really guarantee international peace and security, we must realize that this depends on the extent to which the inherent causes of conflict are removed and that economic and social development constitute the most important foundation upon which to establish international peace and security.

Once we realize this, we shall find that many of the causes of instability arise from economic and social factors. The United Nations should address such factors in all seriousness and should give them priority in the activities of its various organs, particularly the General Assembly and its specialized agencies, in a manner that would heighten the efficacy of the United Nations and the role it plays in facilitating cooperation between States in the fields of economic and social development and in other areas of international cooperation.

This responsibility should be shouldered by the United Nations on the basis of the principles enshrined in its Charter for the enhancement of the factors of economic development and progress and the establishment of multilateral non-discriminatory international economic order which would be based on respect for the choices made by countries and peoples and which would encourage

respect for mutual interests and put an end to exploitation and hegemony.

The United Nations should focus its efforts on the search for the practical formulae that would lead to consolidating the national infrastructures and enhancing the capabilities of the poorer and developing countries and help them overcome their difficulties, implement their development programmes and narrow the huge gap existing at present between the rich industrial countries and the developing countries. Such an effort will no doubt serve the cause of stability, security and peace in the world.

Mr. OULD MOINE (Mauritania) *(interpretation from Arabic)*: Please allow me first of all to extend to Ambassador Insanally of Guyana on behalf of the Mauritanian delegation its most sincere congratulations on his unanimous election to the presidency of this forty-eighth session of the General Assembly. I am convinced that his experience and his comprehensive knowledge of the workings of the Organization, together with his personal qualities, will be the best possible guarantee for the success of this session and the completion of its work with the results we all hope for.

It is also a pleasure for me to congratulate his predecessor, Mr. Stoyan Ganev, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Bulgaria, on the exemplary manner in which he conducted the work of the preceding session.

It is also a pleasure for me to reiterate to my brother, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, our confidence and great respect for the efforts he has constantly deployed since he assumed the duties of Secretary-General of the United Nations, to consolidate the universal reputation of the Organization and to strengthen its credibility and capacity to act.

I should also like to take this opportunity to welcome the States which have recently acceded to the membership of the Organization and to extend to them the congratulations of the Mauritanian delegation. We are convinced that their presence in our midst will consolidate the Organization's effectiveness in the interest of all its members.

The past year has not witnessed any tangible improvement in the international economic situation. A combination of negative factors such as natural disasters and the deterioration of commodity prices continues to widen the gap between developing countries and the industrialized countries, hence the failure of efforts made by the former to emerge from the sphere of underdevelopment and poverty. This situation has continued to deteriorate because of the crisis provoked by the growing increase of the debt burden, which is a threat not only to the economic and social development of developing countries but also to their very survival. It is now an acknowledged fact that Africa is the continent which suffers most from the deteriorating international economic situation, in particular because of its tremendous debt burden. How could one really believe that countries which have barely enough resources to meet their own daily needs and the needs of their people might be able to cope with such obligations? Is it not time for the international community, and the industrialized countries in particular, to give thought to the gravity of such a situation and to consider the possibility of participating more actively in the quest for realistic and effective solutions to this very complex and important problem? In this context, I use the terms "realistic" and "effective" advisedly, because it is these two attributes which have been lacking in all the attempts made in this field to date.

As for the economic and development situation in general, for all the conventions, strategies and agreements aimed at promoting development, that situation has remained static and in many countries it has actually deteriorated. Tangible progress could have been achieved in terms of real development for these countries in general and for the African countries in particular if the industrialized countries had honoured the commitments they made in certain documents - commitments such as the allocation of 0.7 per cent of their national income to official development assistance and if those countries had implemented the programme adopted at the Paris 1990 Conference.

In this struggle for the development of Africa, Mauritania remains convinced that the more the sources of external aid dry up, the greater the need will be for self-reliance and the mobilization by every country of its own resources. That is the reason why, despite the adverse international situation and the unfavourable climatic conditions, we have been able to meet our basic commitments to our partners in development, whether they be States or institutions.

In 1992, our country achieved a 2.5 per cent rate of growth. It financed from its own resources 20 per cent of its investment budget, which amounted to 17.5 billion ouguiyas. Here I should like to express, in the most solemn possible way and in the name of the Government and people of Mauritania, our thanks and our gratitude to

fraternal and friendly States and organizations for the considerable assistance they gave us.

It is clear that there is an organic link between development, on the one hand, and democracy and respect for human rights, on the other. Indeed, what value could be attached to prosperity and economic progress if we do not uphold human rights and safeguard freedoms? What objective for any responsible Government could be more noble than having its people participate in an effective way in the management of their own affairs and the mastering of their own destiny? In contrast to the situation we have just seen which prevails in the economic sphere, the past year has seen a tangible improvement and an increased interest in the field of upholding and respecting human rights. That improvement and that heightened interest were made evident in the holding of the World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna, at which our country was represented by a large high-level delegation headed by our Prime Minister. That high-level representation reflected the great importance our Government attaches to the question of human rights and demonstrated its unshakable faith in the need to formulate a universal concept of human rights applicable to all without any discrimination. There can be no doubt that the implementation of the important results of this Conference will strengthen the progress of peoples towards prosperity and stability.

The importance Mauritania attaches to the events on the international scene regarding human rights bespeaks the commitment of our Government to bring our country out of the emergency rule situation that used to prevail in Mauritania as well as in many other countries. To that end, our Government set for itself, as a priority, the guaranteeing of fundamental civil rights and the effective involvement of its people in the management of their affairs and in the economic and social development policies of the country. In that respect, I am proud to be able to declare here that there is not a single political prisoner in our country.

The democratic process started with the organization of municipal elections, which were a sort of school for democracy within the context of which citizens exercised their freedom of expression, freedom of speech, the virtue of tolerance and freedom of choice. These stages resulted in the adoption on 12 July 1991 of a constitution which guaranteed all fundamental freedoms set forth in the universal declarations and conventions on human rights. The constitution guarantees a clear separation of the executive, legislative and judicial powers. These various institutions were set up and are currently operating in their respective spheres of competence within the context of political pluralism and the freedom of speech envisaged in the constitution - for the first time in the history of our country. Seventeen political parties have been set up, and more than 100 newspapers and magazines have been authorized to be published in complete freedom.

Given our awareness of the need to consolidate this genuine democracy and to ensure respect for freedoms and rights of all social groups, a law guaranteeing trade union pluralism that protects, in a clear-cut manner, all the rights of Mauritanian workers was enacted in order to protect the rights of citizens in the face of administrative red tape, and an independent ombudsman, with the rank of Minister has been appointed to investigate complaints relating to administrative and social problems. To deal with administrative problems and to complete the election of institutions as set forth in the constitution, the President of the Republic issued a decree which brought forward the date of municipal elections. In the field of social affairs, the Government, which has always attached special importance to literacy and to the promotion of the status of women as well as to women's involvement in national development policies, created a department for each of these sectors.

His Excellency the President of the Republic has shown on more than one occasion the interest he attaches to youth and children as an essential asset whose role is absolutely indispensable for the present and future of our nation.

In the health sector, the choice we have opted for, namely health for all has been based on three essential points: first, a continuation of the hygienic efforts and preventive care in their various aspects; secondly, development of specialized medical services; and thirdly, making available to citizens essential medicines at reasonable prices.

The satisfaction we feel at the progress achieved in the field of consolidating democracy and respect for human rights in our country and for our people is equalled only by our feeling of concern at the violations to which those same rights are subjected in other countries and against the interests of the peoples in other regions of the world. This situation is a threat to peace and harmony in the entire world.

Does it stand to reason that the lives, property and holy place of religions of peoples could continue to be trampled and desecrated at the very heart of a continent

such as Europe with its age-old traditions of democracy and respect for human rights? The atrocities of torture, mass murders and ethnic liquidation are all crimes which the Serbs in particular have been perpetrating daily in full view of and with the full knowledge of the entire world, against the Muslims of Bosnia and Herzegovina. This naked defiance of the entire international community, requires that the community as a whole should assume its full responsibilities and act accordingly. In view of this situation, we call once again for pressure to be brought to bear by all legal means on the Serbs and Croats so that they may comply with the will of the international community.

Mauritania has always set as a priority the question of Palestine. It reiterates its constant support for the fraternal Palestinian people under the leadership of its sole and legitimate representative, the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO). It is in that spirit that Mauritania welcomed the agreement concluded between the PLO and Israel, because we believe it is an important step which will lead, we hope, to a comprehensive solution to the Middle East problem that would enable the Palestinian people to regain all their legitimate rights, including the right to self-determination, and guarantee the withdrawal of Israel from all the occupied Arab territories, including the Holy City of Al Quds. It should also make it possible for all resolutions adopted by the Security Council relating to this problem to be implemented, and it should create conditions conducive to peaceful coexistence between all peoples of the region.

My country, which has the honour of presiding over the present session of the League of Arab States, would like to reaffirm here that Arabs have never been warmongers. To the contrary, they have always been a nation oriented towards peace, and working for peace. Now today, the Arabs, and the Palestinians in particular, have demonstrated that for peace they are capable of going beyond hatred, the pain, the wounds of the past and the many, many sufferings to which they were subjected during the Middle East conflict. Could they have made such sacrifices for peace if that were not the foundation, the very foundation of their civilization, and one of their primordial values? Could they have done so if peace were not a way of life and an end in itself in their traditions? Does not "peace" in their language mean life? Those whose salutation means "peace" and whose prayer ends with peace; those who, when they are transgressed against, react by calling for peace; a people bearing such values surely deserves the support of the Organization in bringing about a just and comprehensive peace after which they aspire. It is the duty of the international community as a whole to respond positively to this just aspiration for the recovery of legitimate rights.

In this part of the world, the Middle East, the consequences of the Gulf war are still there to see in every country of the region. Mauritania, which has always affirmed and continues to affirm its commitment to international legality and which expressed total rejection of any violation of the independence of the sister country, Kuwait and the safety of its citizens, rejects any violation of the unity and territorial integrity of Iraq. We appeal to the international community to alleviate the suffering of the children and women of Iraq.

Because of the moderation, the sagacity and the objectivity which have always characterized the postures of the United Arab Emirates, and also because of the legitimate position of this country with respect to Abu Musa, Greater Tunb and Lesser Tunb Islands which belong to it, Mauritania supports the position of the United Arab Emirates. We hope that Iran, the sister Muslim country and neighbour, will respond favourably to the legitimate claims of the State of the United Arab Emirates.

The Middle East is not the only Arab region which suffers from tension. In the Arab Maghreb, despite sustained efforts which have been made for almost five years now, aimed at laying the foundations of a promising regrouping which would promise prosperity for the peoples of the region, as we have seen in the practical and important results reached at the summit of Nouakchott held in November 1992, two problems continue to be of concern to our leaders and our people. The first problem is the question of Western Sahara. In that respect, the United Nations continues to make efforts to smooth out the difficulties, which have heretofore made it impossible to reach a solution. While expressing our hope that these difficulties will soon be ironed out, we will continue our efforts together with the United Nations and the parties involved to reach a just and lasting solution. That solution would, no doubt, be an important stage towards the building of an Arab Maghreb, and a factor of stability and development in the region.

The second problem is the blockade imposed on the fraternal people of Libya, which is detrimental to the other Maghreb peoples as well. In view of the willingness expressed by the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya to cooperate with the United Nations and the parties concerned, we should like to express our hope that the resolution on the blockade

will soon be revised, and that this question will be dealt with through dialogue and understanding.

As for the southern part of the African continent, we should like to record our satisfaction at the new signs of the disappearance of the last bastion of racial segregation, and this is a good occasion to pay tribute to the wisdom and farsightedness of President Nelson Mandela for the path he has followed in dealing with this question. We express here our hope that the measures adopted will be fully implemented so that a democratic non-racial regime could be set up so that it may guarantee the rights of all citizens of this sister African country.

In Somalia, a brother people continues to suffer the ill effects of internal divisions, war and famine. If operation "Restore hope", begun last December, resulted in a certain amount of progress in humanitarian terms, unfortunately, its political outcome has not been satisfactory to all concerned. We hope that the international community will step up its efforts to achieve the objective initially defined for that operation. We also appeal to our Somali brethren to overcome their factional differences and quarrels so that the Somali nation may survive.

Turning to the question of Angola, we hope that our Angolan people will listen to the voice of reason and cooperate with the United Nations Representative with a view to ending this fratricidal war, which serves the interests of none of the parties.

With regard to Liberia, we note with satisfaction the peace agreement that was signed on 25 July 1993, under the auspices of the Economic Community of West African States. We have every hope that the opposing sides will implement that agreement and put an end to this destructive war, which has been devastating the country for several years.

In Rwanda, there are new prospects for peace and stability as a result of the signing, in Arusha, on 4 August 1993, of a peace agreement between the parties to the conflict. We can only applaud this positive step while expressing the hope that it will mark the beginning of a new era for the people of Rwanda.

It is encouraging that Mozambique has returned to a state of normalcy following the signing, on 4 October 1992, of an agreement that made possible the initiation of United Nations operations there. At the political level, President Joaquim Chissano and the leader of RENAMO met on 23 August 1993, thus confirming their determination to put an end to the instability that their country has been experiencing for several decades.

In Asia, the Cambodian people has achieved a major victory with the holding of the recent elections. All Cambodians, under the leadership of His Majesty King Norodom Sihanouk, must now consolidate that achievement so that harmony may prevail and national reconstruction begin. There is no doubt that the United Nations and the international community will stand by the Cambodians, as they have done in the past.

The United Nations, which has an indispensable role to perform in the maintenance of international peace and security, deserves our full support and help. The Organization's universal character, which is today given expression in the membership of 184 independent States, requires, more than ever, a revision of its structures and its methods of operation - in particular, through enlargement of the Security Council.

In that context, we should like to pay tribute to the Secretary-General for his report "An Agenda for Peace", the study and implementation of certain aspects of which has already begun. In this respect, I am very pleased to underscore the fact that at its last meeting, which was held in Cairo, the Council of the League of Arab States recommended the strengthening of cooperation and coordination between the United Nations and the League.

In two years' time the United Nations will celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of its founding. My country has the honour of being involved in the bureau of the Preparatory Committee for that event, which, we feel, will be a real and important watershed in the life of the Organization, as well as an opportunity for its Members to assess the progress that the international community has made towards achieving the noble objectives that were set for the Organization when it was established in 1945. Let us ensure that that assessment will be positive. Let us do so by redoubling our efforts to establish justice and peace and to promote the cause of man - the means and the end of all social- and economic-development operations. For its part, the Islamic Republic of Mauritania will continue to move forward in this direction, in accordance with its unfailing determination to achieve development - development for man and by man.

Mr. Ssemogerere (Uganda): I wish, on behalf of the Uganda delegation, to join those representatives who have already congratulated Mr. Insanally of Guyana on his well-deserved election to the presidency of the United Nations

General Assembly at its forty-eighth session. His election to this high office is a tribute to his personal qualities and also an honour to Guyana, with which Uganda enjoys warm and friendly relations. Given his wide experience, and especially his intimate knowledge of the United Nations, I am confident that he will successfully guide its deliberations during the session. In this effort, he can count on Uganda's cooperation and support.

I wish also to express the appreciation of my delegation to Mr. Insanally's predecessor, Mr. Stoyan Ganev of Bulgaria, who presided with distinction at the forty-seventh session.

Our appreciation goes, equally, to the distinguished Secretary-General, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, who has provided dynamic and courageous leadership to our Organization. He has come to grips with one of the biggest challenges to the international community - conflict resolution - and his incisive reports are an inspiration to us all.

It is with happiness that, on behalf of the people and Government of Uganda, I express a warm welcome to the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Eritrea, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Monaco and Andorra as new Members of the United Nations. We look forward to working closely with them in our common efforts to fulfil the objectives and achieve the goals of the Organization.

Allow me to convey to the people and Government of India Uganda's profound sympathy and solidarity following the tragic earthquake that struck that country last week, causing enormous destruction and massive loss of life.

The dramatic end of the cold war created a wave of optimism. The ideological rivalry and the attendant confrontation between the major Powers yielded to understanding and cooperation, and the nightmare of the nuclear annihilation of the world receded - even if, in our minds, it was not totally eliminated. We believe that we are witnessing the dawn of a new era that promises the beginning of a new order based on peace, justice and equity - as envisaged in the United Nations Charter - both within and between nations. Whether we can succeed in attaining that lofty goal is one of the challenges of our time.

Mr. Khan (Pakistan), Vice-President, took the Chair.

However, the events of the last few years have tempered this sense of optimism. We see contradictory developments - some positive and others negative. On the one hand, there are positive developments in disarmament, the resolution of conflicts, and the emergence of democratic governance in many countries. But, on the other hand, we have witnessed the dangers of ethnic and religious intolerance, which have generated centrifugal forces in many parts of the world, often with debilitating tolls in human life, suffering and the destruction of property. I wish to caution against the danger of making purely ethnic and religious considerations the basis for forging a modern State. The challenge is to find democratic solutions for peaceful and equitable coexistence in a heterogeneous society.

The divide between North and South, reflecting affluence on the one hand and widespread poverty and deprivation on the other, is widening. The same division between the haves and the have-nots is reflected within many nations. Clearly, the deterioration of economic conditions in developing countries, if not adequately addressed, can only lead to despair and frustration. In the long run, such developments will pose a danger to international peace and security. The international community should keep at the top of its agenda the urgent task of ensuring that the positive changes ushered in by the demise of the cold war equitably benefit all mankind. It is incumbent upon us to encourage and promote the positive trends while endeavouring to eliminate or minimize the negative aspects. Marginalization of developing countries cannot be in the interest of a better world. We should muster the will to face the political, economic, ecological and social challenges that stand in the way of the emancipation of the developing countries.

At the last session of the General Assembly the Secretary-General showed the way forward in his "An Agenda for Peace", when he outlined his views on how the United Nations should carry out its task of maintaining international peace and security. He underscored the need for an early warning system for crisis situations and the need for timely preventive action, and he suggested peace-building measures that need to be taken. Uganda supported, and continues to support, the Secretary-General's endeavour in this area.

In our view, a critical pillar of conflict resolution, both at the international and the regional level, is the political will of the parties to the conflict and a commitment on their part to translate that will into practical actions. Where that will and commitment exist,

solutions have been forthcoming, even to what were perceived as intractable problems.

Another critical element in this regard is the capacity to enforce solutions where agreements exist. When a group's major consideration is military victory, contrary to the agreements reached, this may call for legitimate international intervention. I have in mind, for example, a number of agreements brokered between the parties by regional organizations or the United Nations which have then been deliberately scuttled for no legitimate reason. The situations in Yugoslavia, Somalia, Liberia and Angola are vivid reminders of the need for such a capacity. It is untenable that the international community should fail to act while senseless loss of life is perpetuated or chaos obtains in a country, as was the case in Somalia and Liberia. As many speakers have stated, sovereignty should not be used to hold a population hostage. A capacity to intervene in such situations should be in place. This is the question that we should ponder in the course of our deliberations, with a view to establishing parameters for such eventualities.

In our continent, Africa, the contradictory positive and negative trends have also manifested themselves, both in the political arena and the economic sphere. In southern Africa, we are on the verge of achieving the goal the international community has always sought, namely, dismantling apartheid and putting in place a democratic and non-racial Government in South Africa. Here we have an example of political will and determination, and the capacity to translate that will into reality.

Uganda welcomes the progress made in South Africa and the decision to establish the Transitional Executive Council (TEC), the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) and the Independent Broadcasting Authority (IBA). These are vital steps that should pave the way for free and fair elections next April, which should lead to the establishment of a transitional Government based on universal adult suffrage. We salute Mr. Nelson Mandela and other leaders of the liberation movements and President de Klerk for their vision and statesmanship, which have made this progress possible.

With regard to the call to lift sanctions against South Africa in response to this progress, Uganda's approach has always been guided by the position of the people of South Africa, the Organization of African Unity (OAU), the Commonwealth and the United Nations. We are therefore supportive of the statement adopted on 29 September in New York by the OAU Ad Hoc Committee on Southern Africa, which recommends the lifting of all economic sanctions, with the exception of those relating to the arms embargo and nuclear matters, as recognition of the progress made thus far. We also agree with the Ad Hoc Committee's call for vigilance until the Transitional Executive Council is established and for the establishment of full diplomatic relations following the installation of an elected interim Government of national unity.

As regards Mozambique, Uganda welcomed the signing of a peace accord between the Government of Mozambique and RENAMO on 4 October 1992. We had hoped that by now all obstacles to the implementation of the accord would have been settled. Addressing the Assembly on 27 September, President Chissano, outlined the progress made in the revival of the country's economic and social activity as a consequence of a cease-fire being effectively honoured. The deployment of the United Nations Operation in Mozambique (ONUMOZ) provides an atmosphere conducive to implementing the provisions of the General Peace Agreement. We commend the Government of Mozambique for the flexibility and statesmanship they have demonstrated. We call on RENAMO to reciprocate equally and to comply with Security Council resolution 863 (1993), so that the people of Mozambique can embark on the important task of national reconstruction in an atmosphere of peace and stability.

Uganda deeply regrets the resumption of hostilities in Angola, which clearly has negative consequences for the whole region. Remarkable progress had been made, culminating in the United Nations-supervised elections last year. Unfortunately, the hopes and aspirations of the people were dashed by the resumption of hostilities which interrupted the electoral process. The only way forward lies in national reconciliation and the acceptance of the rules of democratic governance. Uganda supports Security Council resolution 864 (1993), the implementation of which would pave way for a lasting solution. It is incumbent upon UNITA to abide by this resolution.

In our own region Uganda welcomes the agreement between the two parties, the Rwandese Government and the Rwandese Patriotic Front, on a process of national reconciliation and the installation of a broad-based transitional government. Uganda, like other countries in the region, is ready and willing to support the Rwandese people in their endeavour to find a lasting settlement of their problems. This would also help foster stability and cooperation in our subregion. I wish to pay a tribute to President Ali Hassan Mwinyi and the Government of the

United Republic of Tanzania, to the Organization of African Unity, and to all those who have been helping the parties to reach this accord.

The United Nations has a critical role to play in the implementation of the Rwanda agreements. Both parties to the conflict requested the United Nations to provide a neutral force. We are happy to see that this request has received positive consideration by the Security Council. The Council has accepted the Secretary-General's recommendation for the establishment of a neutral force known as the United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda (UNAMIR). In the meantime, Uganda has agreed to the deployment on the Rwanda-Uganda border of the United Nations Observer Mission Uganda-Rwanda (UNOMUR) - as part and parcel of confidence-building measures - and stands ready to give additional support as and when requested.

The conflict in southern Sudan continues to be of great concern to, and a source of anguish for, us in Uganda. The civil war has escalated rather than abated, resulting in loss of life, increased refugee flows, and the displacement of the population to neighbouring countries, Uganda included. We urge the parties to the conflict to cooperate in support of regional efforts designed to find a lasting solution. I wish also to appeal to the international community to continue providing humanitarian assistance and to be supportive of negotiations for a peaceful settlement.

The situation in Somalia is a vivid example of both natural and man-made disasters. Uganda welcomed the decision of the Security Council in 1992 to provide humanitarian assistance to the Somali people and to restore order in Somalia. The United Nations operations helped to end massive starvation and brought hope to the people of Somalia. Uganda is also supportive of the second United Nations Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM II), whose mandate is to provide an appropriate atmosphere for continued humanitarian assistance and for reconstruction and rehabilitation, and to facilitate an overall political settlement.

We were encouraged by the Addis Ababa agreement of March this year whereby various Somali political forces agreed upon a programme of disarmament and reconciliation. It is sad that the situation in Somalia took a dramatic turn for the worse with the killing of members of the United Nations peace-keeping force. We regret the loss of life and attacks on the peace-keeping force. I wish to express our sincere condolences to the bereaved families and their respective Governments. It remains our conviction that these incidents, reprehensible as they are, should not lead the United Nations to divert from, let alone abdicate, its responsibilities towards the Somali people. Much has been achieved. Normalcy has been restored to much of the country, although chaos and armed resistance continue in a number of areas, especially in and around Mogadishu, where they imperil international efforts. We call on Somali political leaders to cooperate with the Intergovernmental Authority on Drought and Development (IGADD), the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and the United Nations in efforts aimed at achieving peace and reconciliation and setting in motion transitional arrangements, including the establishment of a broad-based government. I wish to take this opportunity to commend United Nations personnel, the countries which have provided material and financial support, and the volunteers who have risked their lives in this worthy cause.

As regards the situation in Liberia, Uganda supports the initiative of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) for the settlement of the crisis. We welcomed the Cotonou Agreement signed on 25 July 1993, which provides for a cease-fire and for the transitional arrangement leading to elections early next year. The ECOWAS Miliary Observer Group (ECOMOG) has clearly been a stabilizing force in Liberia. That is why it has been entrusted with the supervision and implementation of the Cotonou Agreement. We look forward to the full implementation of this accord.

All this provides an example of the matching of the political will of the parties to the conflict to the capacity in the region to implement the agreed settlement.

Equally, the Security Council decision to make it easier for the United Nations to supplement regional efforts in the search for agreements and in their implementation is most welcome. Apart from enhancing the regional capacity for peace-keeping, the Security Council decision helps to engender confidence.

At the OAU Summit held in Cairo in July this year, African States agreed to set up, within the OAU, a mechanism for conflict resolution. The positive developments in Liberia and Rwanda, where the OAU and the pertinent leaders in the subregion have effectively discharged this role, are indicative of the potentialities of the regional mechanism.

In the Middle East, the mutual recognition between the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and Israel,

together with the agreements signed between them, constitute a breakthrough of historic proportions. This is yet another illustration of the dictum that where there is a will, vision and statesmanship, a way forward will be found. This development holds the promise for concord and cooperation in the Middle East region as a whole. We welcome the Declaration of Principles on Palestinian interim self-rule in the occupied territories. These arrangements, which envisage a five-year transition period, are an important step towards a comprehensive and lasting settlement in accordance with Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973). We commend Chairman Arafat and Prime Minister Rabin for the courage and statesmanship they have displayed. We encourage all of them to persevere in the task ahead and on the journey they have begun. I wish also to express Uganda's appreciation to Norway, the United States, the Russian Federation, and all those who were instrumental in the reaching of this historic accord.

Three years have elapsed since the outbreak of the Gulf crisis. We are glad that the sovereignty of Kuwait was restored. It remains our hope that, with positive developments elsewhere in the region, it will be possible for the people in the Gulf to be reconciled and to solve the outstanding problems so that harmony and cooperation can be re-established. This requires, among other things, compliance with Security Council resolutions relating to the Gulf War settlement.

Uganda supports the efforts by the Secretary-General to ensure an overall settlement of the Cyprus problem. Any settlement, while taking into account the legitimate interests of the parties, should safeguard the sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity of Cyprus.

As regards the Korean peninsula, Uganda supports the aspiration of the Korean people to peaceful reunification. We encourage them to continue their dialogue towards this objective.

In Cambodia we have just witnessed the fruitful completion of the peace process in accordance with the Paris Agreements. Under the auspices of the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC) the Cambodian people have been able to exercise their right to vote and to decide on their own Government in the general elections for a constituent assembly. We are happy to see that a new democratic Constitution, with a constitutional monarchy has been peacefully promulgated. I wish to express the gratitude of the Uganda delegation to the Secretary-General and the UNTAC personnel who, under the able leadership of Mr. Yasushi Akashi, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, have contributed towards a comprehensive settlement of the Cambodian question. Our appreciation goes equally to Viet Nam, France, Australia, China, the United States of America and the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN), which, at different stages, contributed to the peace process.

It is to us a matter of deep regret that in the former Yugoslavia, instability, strife and war based on ethnic and religious differences continue unabated. In pursuit of the reprehensible notion of "ethnic cleansing", atrocities are being committed. In spite of the grave situation, it has not been possible for the Security Council and the international community to act decisively to put an end to the agony and suffering there. The injunctions of the Security Council continue to be flouted with impunity. We reject and condemn the notion of "ethnic cleansing". I wish, however, to commend the United Nations Protection Force for the efforts it has made under the most difficult of conditions.

On disarmament, Uganda is encouraged by the progress achieved in the wake of the demise of the cold war. The United States and the Russian Federation under START II have significantly reduced their nuclear arsenals. We were encouraged by the decision of the United States to extend the moratorium on nuclear tests until 1994, by the declaration of Russia not to resume testing even if others did, and by France's commitment not to be the first to resume. In spite of the recent set-backs, we hope that this moratorium will hold. Uganda, however, believes that a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty is the ultimate solution. As a State party to the non-proliferation Treaty, we shall continue to participate actively in the preparatory process leading to the 1995 Review Conference. We support the extension of the Treaty, subject to periodic reviews. We shall also seek to remove the imbalances in the present Treaty and to secure increased assistance for developing countries in the area of the peaceful application of nuclear energy.

We maintain that there exists an intrinsic relationship between the disarmament process and development. Developing countries paid a heavy price during the height of the cold war as world attention was focused on acquiring additional armaments under the doctrines of deterrence. Many of them were trapped in civil conflict arising from ideological wars. As the resources devoted to building armaments are released in the disarmament process, these should be applied for development both within and between nations. Unfortunately, at the

international level, we have yet to see the peace dividend being channelled towards assistance to developing countries.

At the national level, Uganda, after the restoration of peace in the country, has now embarked on a process of scaling down its army to a level which the economy can sustain and which at the same time meets our legitimate defence needs. This is a bold decision by the Government, which, in the long run, should release resources for development purposes. I wish here to express our appreciation to those countries and organizations which have agreed to assist us in the resettlement and integration of demobilized soldiers within the civilian community.

This session is taking place in the aftermath of the momentous World Conference on Human Rights that took place in Vienna. That Conference reaffirmed the commitment of the international community to try to secure the full and universal enjoyment of human rights. We hope that as a result there will be increased awareness in the world of the importance of human rights and a determination to build the requisite capacity at the national and local levels to ensure their enforcement.

Linked with the human rights issue is the question of democratic governance and the rule of law. Democratic governance promotes human rights. In Uganda, as part of the restoration of democratic civilian rule, the Constitutional Commission has already produced a draft constitution. The election of a Constituent Assembly, which is to deliberate and agree on the Constitution, will be held in December this year or early next year.

Whether in Africa or anywhere else, the democratization process may be difficult, but it is an essential ingredient for peace, stability, the rule of law, and the full respect and enjoyment of human rights. This is particularly urgent in developing countries, in Africa in particular. They are essential aspects and conditions of the development process. We must therefore bring our full energies to bear so that the democratization process may gain momentum.

One of the major objectives of the United Nations, enshrined in the Charter, is the promotion of economic and social progress. In our quest for peace, it is imperative to address the economic and social challenges, which, too often, are the fundamental causes of conflicts in many regions.

The present world economic situation is very grim. There has been a prolonged recession in the developed countries which, in turn, has had a negative effect on the world economic situation. This has been devastating for the developing countries, which have had to labour in a harsh international environment. The crippling external debt is one of the major obstacles for developing countries. In Uganda, for example, it is estimated that we shall spend about 60 per cent of our projected export receipts on debt servicing. The debt problem has been exacerbated by the unfavourable terms of trade, especially the collapse of the prices of commodities, which are the mainstay of our economies. Coupled with the reduction of resource flows, this has hampered our development. Yet, while still experiencing these conditions, our countries have undertaken structural adjustment reforms which call for heavy sacrifices on the part of the population, especially the very vulnerable people. For these programmes to achieve the desired objectives of sustained growth, it is imperative that further measures on debt relief, including debt cancellation, be put in place, more so in respect of sub-Saharan African countries. There is also an urgent need to increase significantly the volume of resource flows in support of development efforts in these countries. We look forward to the urgent and balanced conclusion of the Uruguay Round of multilateral trade negotiations. We are hopeful that a successful conclusion of these negotiations would increase world trade and increase the access of our products to world markets. This should help to increase our export earnings.

Regrettably, for Africa the critical economic situation and the trend of marginalization continue. It is crucial to arrest and reverse this trend if Africa is to succeed or even survive in the geopolitical and economic system of the twenty-first century. We need to enlarge our economic space. Forging regional integration is an imperative if Africa is to end its underdevelopment and to be integrated into the global economy.

African integration will create economies of scale, which are essential for the diversification of the African economies, making full use of Africa's natural resources, increasing self-sufficiency and strengthening the continent's position within the global economy. It is precisely for this reason that the Organization of African Unity adopted the Abuja Treaty creating an African Economic Community. The Treaty stipulates, *inter alia*, the strengthening of subregional economic groupings. In this regard, the countries of the Eastern and Southern Africa Preferential Trade Area have resolved to establish a subregional common market. A treaty to this effect will

be signed in Kampala, Uganda, on 4 November this year. We appeal to the international community to be supportive of regional integration by providing assistance to put in place the necessary infrastructures.

The Rio Earth summit was an important milestone on the road to forging a global consensus on sustainable development. Uganda welcomes the adoption of Agenda 21, which spelled out measures to be adopted by the international community. As a follow-up, Uganda has drawn up a National Environment Action Plan to address our environmental problems. We welcome the establishment of the Commission on Sustainable Development and of the Negotiating Committee for an international convention on drought and desertification, in line with the wishes of African countries.

In spite of the progress made, we notice a reluctance on the part of the donor community as regards fulfilling the commitments agreed upon in Rio. This is especially true with regard to providing new and additional resources. I wish to stress that for us in Uganda the cause of environmental degradation is poverty. Forests, for example, are being depleted daily because the people use their trees as a source of energy. To reverse this trend we need capital to exploit hydro-electric power or solar energy, both of which we have aplenty. We urge the international community to appreciate this problem.

As regards reform of the United Nations, we maintain our position that we shall support those measures which improve efficiency and which do not distort the priorities that have been agreed on, and which reflect the interests of all Member States. We are also supportive of the proposals for the enlargement of the Security Council to reflect present-day realities. We reaffirm that an important criterion to take into account is that a country, big or small, seeking membership of the Security Council must fully embrace, and be seen to act in accordance with, the underlying values of the United Nations mandate for peace, respect for human rights, democratization and other accepted international norms. It is also important that the composition of all United Nations organs accord with the principles of the Charter, notably the principle of sovereign equality of nations and the principle of democracy. It is with this in mind that we shall examine all proposals for restructuring that are before us.

We stand at a historic watershed on account of contradictory trends which characterize the current transition to a new world order yet to be shaped and defined. We have, one hopes, a unique opportunity to construct a firm foundation for the edifice of a future in which the interests of all of us can be adequately catered for.

Mr. ABU SALIH (Sudan): Allow me at the outset to express to Ambassador Insanally my special congratulations on his election to preside over the General Assembly at this important session. He represents Guyana, an active member of the Non-Aligned Movement, of which Sudan is proud to be a founding member. May I also extend our thanks and appreciation to His Excellency Mr. Stoyan Ganev for the skilful and efficient manner in which he conducted the work of the previous session.

The United Nations represents hope for all nations and nascent States, especially those that attained their independence through long struggle. It is a great honour and pleasure for me to welcome our sister country, Eritrea, which has joined the membership of the United Nations. Our two peoples continue to enjoy mutual respect and esteem, and our Governments are endeavouring to foster fraternal relations with a view to achieving prosperity for the brotherly peoples of the two countries, and for the whole region.

Allow me also to salute the Czech Republic, Slovakia, The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Monaco and Andorra, which joined the United Nations as part of a new momentum contributing to human endeavours to achieve stability, prosperity and peace for the world.

I also salute the Secretary-General, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, who is leading the Secretariat of the United Nations at a crucial stage as it faces many challenges and pressures.

The Sudan learned with grief and sadness of the tragic loss of life in the earthquake which struck parts of India. I extend the deepest sympathy of the Sudan to friendly India along with heartfelt condolences to the families of those who lost their lives.

Since the previous session, important events have emerged in the international arena. We are now witnessing accelerated political and social change unprecedented in history. New international situations and changes occur every day; we are all trying to keep up with them. Today, we are experiencing a phase of travail and transition, which results every day in new, divergent patterns. The most striking of those patterns is the widening of the gap between the rich North and the less privileged South.

The trend in today's world is towards the machinery of regional groupings. This reflects the fact that the world has already started to be more inclined to think in a more collective manner. We hope that this new pattern will be positive and constructive, giving due respect to the charters and covenants that are binding on all. We seriously assert that developing countries are no longer principal partners in most of the resolutions that are adopted, particularly within the framework of the Security Council and other United Nations organs. Had developing countries been allowed equitable participation, their contribution could have been more effective in the course of many of these important events, specially in the field of regional and international peace and security.

Four years ago we started reviewing the functions of the United Nations and its various organs. We must place on record, from this rostrum, our conviction that this Organization has a basic role to play in the maintenance of international peace and security and the achievement of prosperity for mankind. For the United Nations fully to perform such a vital role, its governing Charter must be fully respected. The Charter must also be adhered to by all, and must be updated to keep pace with the developments that have occurred since its adoption.

The General Assembly too should be enabled fully to perform its functions for the maintenance of peace and security. The General Assembly should be given its due importance, equal and parallel to that of the Security Council.

Selectivity in implementing the provisions of the Charter must be abandoned. In this regard, we firmly stress that the activities of the Security Council must be transparent and that the Council should adopt a democratic approach in its decisions. It is thus inevitable that the question of the Council's permanent membership, and the right of veto, which enables a few States to invalidate the opinion of the majority, be reviewed, especially at a time when the United Nations is advocating the values of democracy, participation, justice and equality.

The United Nations and one of its organs, the Security Council, are currently engaged in serious and active attempts to settle disputes based on new prospects for the establishment of regional and international peace and security. Let us pause here for a moment. We all aspire to save the world from the calamities of war and the destructive consequences of the prevailing social and economic situation. Yet, at the same time, we reject double standards in the resolutions of the Security Council, especially in relation to international peace and security. We are anxious lest the United Nations lose its proper vision in the heat of events.

The nature of the responsibilities and duties of the Organization requires strict neutrality. International peace and security is a principle that must apply to all. But to see the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina suffer to the brink of elimination because of the shaky and defective resolutions of the Security Council is a situation that should not be allowed to pass unnoticed. Similarly, the Somali people cannot be allowed to remain victims of irregularities committed by the international forces there because of the departure from their binding original mandate. This is a matter that requires both change and a strict and immediate investigation. We are still witnessing the deterioration of the security situation in Somalia owing to the continuing fighting between the international forces and some of the Somali factions, as well as with individuals. This has resulted in many killings and has caused the international forces to stray from their original mandate. We have previously expressed our reservations with regard to the hasty use of international forces in Somalia without consulting the States of the region or exhausting the efforts and endeavours being exerted by those States to find a solution to the Somali crisis.

We are concerned that the continuation of fighting between the international forces and some of the Somali factions will shed more blood, complicate the problem and render it insoluble by the United Nations. Therefore, we request the United Nations and the forces that are supposed to operate under its banner to refrain from continuing the type of actions that would provoke the Somali people and the country's factions or affect the structure of their political future, values and cultural and religious heritage.

We also deem it fitting that the Permanent Committee on Somalia of the States of The Horn of Africa be given the necessary time to perform its pioneering function of finding a solution to the Somali crisis. These States are better acquainted with the nature and dimension of the problem by virtue of their special relations with Somalia and its people.

We will support new international arrangements that will ensure the enhancement of the performance of the Organization and establish justice and tranquillity among all. The arrangements we are hoping for shall not infringe upon the sovereignty and territorial integrity of States or meddle with their independence or right of decision-making. Preventive diplomacy, associated with peace-

making and peace-keeping, should be motivated by a basic goal, namely, the elimination of regional and international tension. This could be achieved by defining the causes of political and social conflicts in order to eliminate them so that different societies might enjoy stability, well-being, and peace. Preventive diplomacy and the subsequent use of political and military force cannot be applied solely against less privileged countries and vulnerable peoples.

In brief, we are hoping for a new formula within the framework of current international arrangements to guarantee the rights of all and to save the world from the hegemony of the stronger over the less privileged. We also aspire to a greater role for the regional organizations of the developing countries and to their representation in the important forum of the Security Council, which is entrusted with the task of maintaining peace and security all over the world.

Along with this understanding of the new role of the United Nations in protecting and preserving the rights of States, we call for the lifting of the economic embargo imposed on Iraq. The Iraqi people have suffered for an extended period of time from the unfair embargo that is still imposed on them, despite the exhaustion of the reasons that invoked it.

Another example of the misuse of this international Organization is the embargo imposed on Libya without any legal and justified cause to permit the actions taken against that country. Libya has already responded to Security Council resolution 731 (1992) and shown sufficient flexibility to settle its differences with the Western States, a matter that would justify the lifting of the embargo imposed on it.

The agenda items before this session include important issues reflecting the accelerated pace of events I mentioned at the beginning of my statement. However, I prefer to be direct in touching upon issues of immediate concern to us in the Sudan because of the misunderstanding that has accompanied them.

During the forty-eighth session of the Human Rights Commission, held at Geneva in March 1992, and upon a motion by the United States representative, the Commission adopted a resolution appointing an independent expert assigned to investigate the human-rights situation in the Sudan and to submit a report to the forty-ninth session of the Commission in March-April 1993. The States sponsoring that resolution did not wish to wait for the report of the independent expert but pushed the matter to the forty-seventh session of the General Assembly, where a resolution on the alleged human-rights violations in the Sudan was adopted. The sponsoring States used all the influence, pressure and the mechanical majority they possessed to see that that politically motivated resolution was adopted.

In his report to the forty-ninth session of the Commission on Human Rights in March 1993, the independent expert praised the cooperation of the Government of the Sudan and explained that he had had neither the time nor the opportunity to judge the situation of human rights in the Sudan or to study the matter comprehensively. He indicated that the Commission might wish to extend his mission in order to allow him to complete his mandate. While we do not conceive of any justifiable reasons behind his appointment, the Government of the Sudan nevertheless extended every possible cooperation to the Special Rapporteur, who visited the Sudan last week and will submit his report.

Respect for and maintenance of human rights represent one of the sacred principles that are enshrined in all divine religions as well as in man-made laws. The Sudan, inspired by its cultural and civilized heritage, pays due attention to the issues of human rights. The Sudanese Government and society respect and observe the human-rights values based on their religious belief and traditions. Accordingly, we reject any politicization or manipulation of such a sacred doctrine as a pretext for meddling in the internal affairs of States or for imposing a specific cultural trend or option of civilization on any State. For the same reason, we are of the view that developmental assistance should not be tied to a distorted human-rights record. The right to development itself represents an inalienable human right. We also opt for equality and fairness in assessing or monitoring the performance of States in the field of human rights. We adamantly reject policies that reflect a double standard in dealing with human rights, because the Sudan has been victimized by such policies. We also hope that universality of human rights will not be construed to justify denial of the cultural, religious and indigenous specifics of various States and peoples.

Those who pose as defenders of human rights in the Sudan ignore the terrorist practices of the outlaws in southern Sudan lead by John Garang. They have opted to keep silent with respect to the atrocities he has committed, atrocities such as the abduction and recruitment of children for military operations, the regular killing of civilian populations, the downing of civilian aircraft and the kidnapping and killing of United Nations staff working in

relief operations. They have also kept silent with regard to his continued obstruction of all serious peacemaking endeavours initiated inside or outside the Sudan. Not only that, they have received him as a top official dignitary and extended to him every moral support, despite his gross violation of human rights.

In this connection we view General Assembly resolution 47/142 as a biased resolution that has contributed to the intransigence of the Garang movement and motivated it to reject all Government endeavours to achieve a peaceful settlement through negotiations. We are also convinced that that resolution lacks any substantive justification, and we stand ready to provide all the factual information on the human-rights situation in the Sudan to all who are interested.

Those who accuse the Government of the Sudan of violating the human rights of its own citizens have also ignored the giant achievements of the Government, such as adopting the conferences system along the lines of *Shura* and organizing the national conferences to determine the structure of the political system in order to lay down the basic foundations of national unity and to look for ways and means to achieve a real peace guaranteeing fundamental political, social, cultural and religious rights for all citizens. As a result, a National Transitional Assembly was established as the supreme legislative organ of the country, pending completion of the political structures at both the federal and the state level and the conduct of the presidential elections to be held in the country at a subsequent stage.

Many must have learned of the recent decision of the United States Government to add the Sudan to its own classification of countries allegedly sponsoring terrorism. While the United States Government is free to take whatever decision it deems appropriate, we have the right to question the facts and findings on which the United States Government has based its decision. While the United States has the right to enact domestic decisions, the utilization of such decisions as a prelude to further actions beyond its territories contradicts international law and the United Nations Charter. We cannot understand how a super-Power which enjoys permanent membership in the Security Council can enact domestic legislation to justify the pursuit of its private interests in the territories of other countries. Such instances are numerous, the most recent of which was the search in the port of Djibouti of a vessel freighting sugar en route to sisterly Somalia.

It is our conviction that the motive behind the media campaign against the Sudan is the alienation of Sudan from its African and Arab affiliations and the smearing of its image by erroneously labelling its civilization as terrorist. This media campaign constitutes a prelude to a siege on Sudan similar to what has happened to some other countries. We are known to all as a peaceful nation; we denounce terrorism in all its forms. Accordingly, the decision lacks the necessary legal support, contravenes justice and good conscience and clearly exceeds the role of the United Nations. As proof of our assertion, it could not generate any support. Former President Jimmy Carter and a number of credible institutions and newspapers have expressed their scepticism and criticism regarding its ethical value. Likewise, the Sudanese peoples have demonstrated their rejection and denunciation of that decision. Real terrorism is when a single super-Power uses it as a pretext and utilizes its might to terrorize small developing countries for no reason except that they opted for a path of independent decision-making and rejected blind proselytism, or merely for their different views.

Mixing politics with humanitarian assistance is rather risky, especially in relief work, which is a sensitive matter, as it directly affects human survival through supplying basic needs such as food and medicine. This necessitates the absolute neutrality of the relief donors. Recent years have witnessed an increasing involvement of politics in humanitarian work, which fact led Mr. Cornelio Sommaruga, President of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) to explicitly warn against the danger of mixing politics with humanitarian work. Sudan has suffered tremendously from these attempts to tarnish its image by intentionally distorting its achievements in relief delivery so that they are seen as failures, its initiatives depicted as obstructions and its cooperation as impediment of the inflow of relief supplies. The reality is that we feel we are unjustly treated by some States and some media that tend to undermine our efforts in relief operation and blemish our reputation.

However, Sudan has a bright and outstanding record in this area. Operation Lifeline Sudan is an unprecedented initiative; it has enabled the United Nations and non-governmental organizations to provide relief supplies to affected populations, whoever and wherever they are. Since the forty-seventh session, continuous efforts have been made to strengthen the efficiency of Operation Lifeline and its relief programme, such as the signing of an agreement between the Government of the Sudan, the United Nations and the rebel factions in December 1992 to secure the flow of relief to all areas in need. In

January 1993, another agreement was signed between the Government of the Sudan, the United Nations and the non-governmental organizations to facilitate and enhance the role of the non-governmental organizations in relief and rehabilitation. In March 1993, the Government of the Sudan signed a memorandum of understanding with the International Committee of the Red Cross to streamline the cooperation between the Government and the Committee and to strengthen the effectiveness of its operations in southern Sudan. The allocation of 153,000 metric tons of grain by the Government to the World Food Programme to be distributed to the population in need represents a cornerstone of our contribution to relief efforts.

The mission of Mr. Vieri Traxler, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs for the Sudan, and its positive outcome, stand as another example of the cooperation of the Government of the Sudan with the international community. A number of modalities were agreed upon during that mission to guarantee the full implementation of all previously signed agreements. It is my pleasure to convey to this Assembly that during Mr. Traxler's mission to the Sudan a number of steps were taken to implement what was agreed upon. On the initiative of the Government of the Sudan, an agreement was reached to send joint assessment missions, constituted by the United Nations and the non-governmental organizations working in relief operations, to about 30 safe locations in the three Southern States, the Nuba mountains and Kordofan. It was also agreed that the town of Malakal and its environs would be considered a model of relief integrated programmes to be implemented in other areas after proving successful. This is in addition to other steps oriented towards strengthening the efficiency of operations and ensuring relief for those in need wherever they may be.

Allow me to acquaint this Assembly with the achievements of the Government of Sudan in political, economic and social fields. The priority item on my Government's agenda is to attain a just and lasting peace in southern Sudan and to put an end to the war that horrified innocent civilians and devastated their lives, the war that exposed them to the scourges of death, famine, disease and displacement. This war, which was the by-product of the colonial conspiracy, has turned the citizens into recipients of relief and made them dependent on others. It constitutes a perpetual squandering of vast resources that could have been utilized in economic and social development and for the welfare of the Sudanese peoples in the south and the north.

Faithful to its earnest endeavours to bring about a peaceful settlement of the discord in the south, the Sudanese Government has emphasized since 1989 its readiness to talk peace with the rebels without preconditions. The Government put forward a comprehensive framework for peace emanating from the recommendations of a national conference. This approach is based on remedying the lingering causes of the conflict in the areas of power- and wealth-sharing, relations between religion and State, adoption of the federal system of government to meet the aspirations of different regions for a genuine sharing of power, the exemption of the south from the application of *Sharia* laws and the redistribution and reallocation of resources for social and economic development on equitable grounds.

In this positive spirit the Government held several rounds of negotiations with the rebel movement. The last meeting took place in Abuja with the mediation of sisterly Nigeria. The Government, out of its keen desire to bring the peace talks to a successful conclusion, showed great flexibility, but it realized, unfortunately, that, owing to the pressures of foreign interests, Garang's faction was not the master of its decision. That was why we could not reach an agreement in order to alleviate the suffering of our citizens in the south.

The failure of the second Abuja peace talks did not, however, weaken the determination of the Government to continue searching for peace through negotiations. To this end, the Government started a new round of negotiations, this time in Sudanese territory, with the other united rebel factions. The Government also accepted a quadrilateral peace initiative put forward by four Heads of State members of the Intergovernmental Authority for Drought and Development (IGADD): Kenya, Uganda, Ethiopia and Eritrea. We believe that neighbouring countries are able and keen to help in resolving this stalemate. Furthermore, the Government accepted the initiative of former President Jimmy Carter in mediating between the Government and the rebel factions.

In the area of economic development, the Government of the Sudan adopted an ambitious three-year economic programme for the implementation of far-reaching reforms in the structure of the Sudanese economy by engaging in a free-market policy, diminishing the role of the Government in trade and economic activities, and giving the private sector its due catalytic role in these activities.

Economic and monetary regulations were enacted to encourage investment, especially in agriculture and animal products. This economic programme reaped its fruits, and we have registered an increase of over 10 per cent in the rate of growth of the gross national product, as well as self-sufficiency in grain and sugar. This programme energized the economy and led to the inflow of foreign investment, owing to the free-market policy, the reform of the infrastructure and the building up of the capacity of human resources.

All these developments could have achieved positive results, not for the benefit of the Sudanese people alone, but also for the African and Arab regions, had they not been forestalled by political machinations in areas of international trade and economic cooperation, as well as interference in the work of the international monetary institutions. An unjust and undeclared economic embargo deprived the Sudan of development resources from bilateral and multilateral institutions. This unjust behaviour deprived the people of the Sudan of their right to development, a right enshrined in all international conventions.

In the social field, the Government is very attentive to the needs of the impoverished sector of the population. Financial support is increasingly extended to them through *Zakat* funds and social-welfare institutions. A number of commercial subsidies were introduced to alleviate the economic burden of a broad sector of the population. Salaries in the public and private sectors were increased and subjected to continuous revision. All this was done in full compliance with and respect for human dignity, and to eliminate poverty.

Moreover, in the area of legislation, the Government excluded the States with non-Muslim majorities from being subjected to *Sharia* laws.

In the area of human rights, a Supreme Council for Human Rights was established, under the chairmanship of the second-highest ranking official in the State.

Security prevails throughout the country, the rule of law has replaced chaos, and there have been other great accomplishments in the fields of education, literacy, health, environment, and the improvement of the living conditions of displaced persons and their relocation to ensure a dignified life while they await the elimination of the conditions that forced them to become displaced persons.

The position of Sudan has remained clear ever since the commencement of the Arab-Israeli peace talks: we believe that they should lead to the exercise of Arab and Palestinian rights based on the provisions of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 425 (1978). Since the signing of the Declaration of Principles of self-autonomy between the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and Israel, the Middle East and the Palestinians' cause have entered a new phase. The Arab League Council of Ministers, after its 100th meeting in Cairo, issued a communiqué on this agreement based on Security Council resolutions. The communiqué emphasized the necessity of an Israeli withdrawal from all the occupied Arab territories in the West Bank, the Gaza Strip, Jerusalem, the Golan Heights and southern Lebanon so as to open a new page in the history of the Middle East and enable the people of the region to work for development and prosperity. The Arab League Council considered the agreement a step forward towards the establishment of a comprehensive peace in the region, provided that other steps to complement it were guaranteed such as a complete Israeli withdrawal from the occupied Syrian Golan Heights, the West Bank, including Jerusalem, and the territory in southern Lebanon.

The Arab world has articulated its judgement on this historic agreement and proved its sincerity about desiring a just, lasting and comprehensive settlement in the region. At this critical point in time, we appeal to our Palestinian brothers to consolidate their unity and unify their determinant objectives. They should close the doors against any attempts to divide them. The United Nations is called upon to supervise this peace plan by insisting on the implementation of all its resolutions based on international legitimacy. The custodians of this peace plan are also called upon to ensure an expeditious Israeli withdrawal from all the occupied Arab and Palestinian territories, in full compliance with the relevant United Nations resolutions.

The positive developments taking place in South Africa as a result of the struggle of our brothers and sisters there in their quest for emancipation, equality and the rule of the majority stand as proof of the important role the United Nations can play in accordance with the principles of the Charter whenever a Member State shows the necessary political will. My delegation associates itself with the leader Nelson Mandela in his call upon the international Organization to secure the transitional arrangements leading to the emergence of a democratic, unified and non-racial South Africa.

As an African country, we believe that Africa has demonstrated throughout history its unique ability to resolve African disputes through African mediation. In this regard, I salute the Organization of African Unity (OAU), the Intergovernmental Authority on Drought and Desertification (IGADD), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and all other African subregional organizations, as well as various African States that have played leading roles in the peaceful settlement of several disputes in such countries as Rwanda and Liberia, thus contributing to peace and stability in Africa. We hope that peace will soon prevail in Angola, Mozambique and Somalia so that Africa can enjoy the stability that will enable it to meet the challenges of construction and development and move towards prosperity for the African people and people of the whole world.

The meeting rose at 8.10 p.m.